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The Qutb Shahs of Golconda



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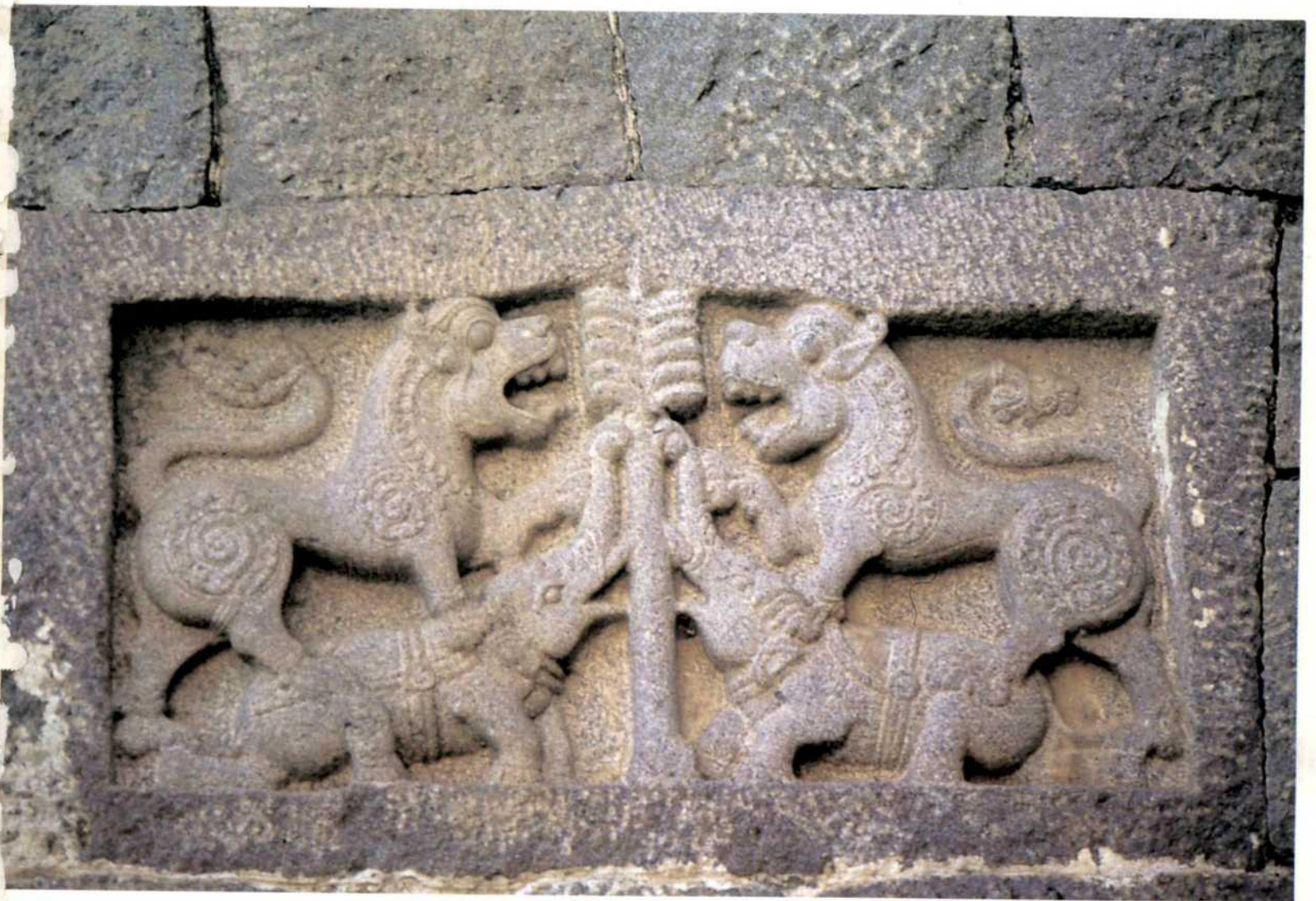
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*Golconda Fort at Sunset. Sixteenth century. Photo: courtesy.
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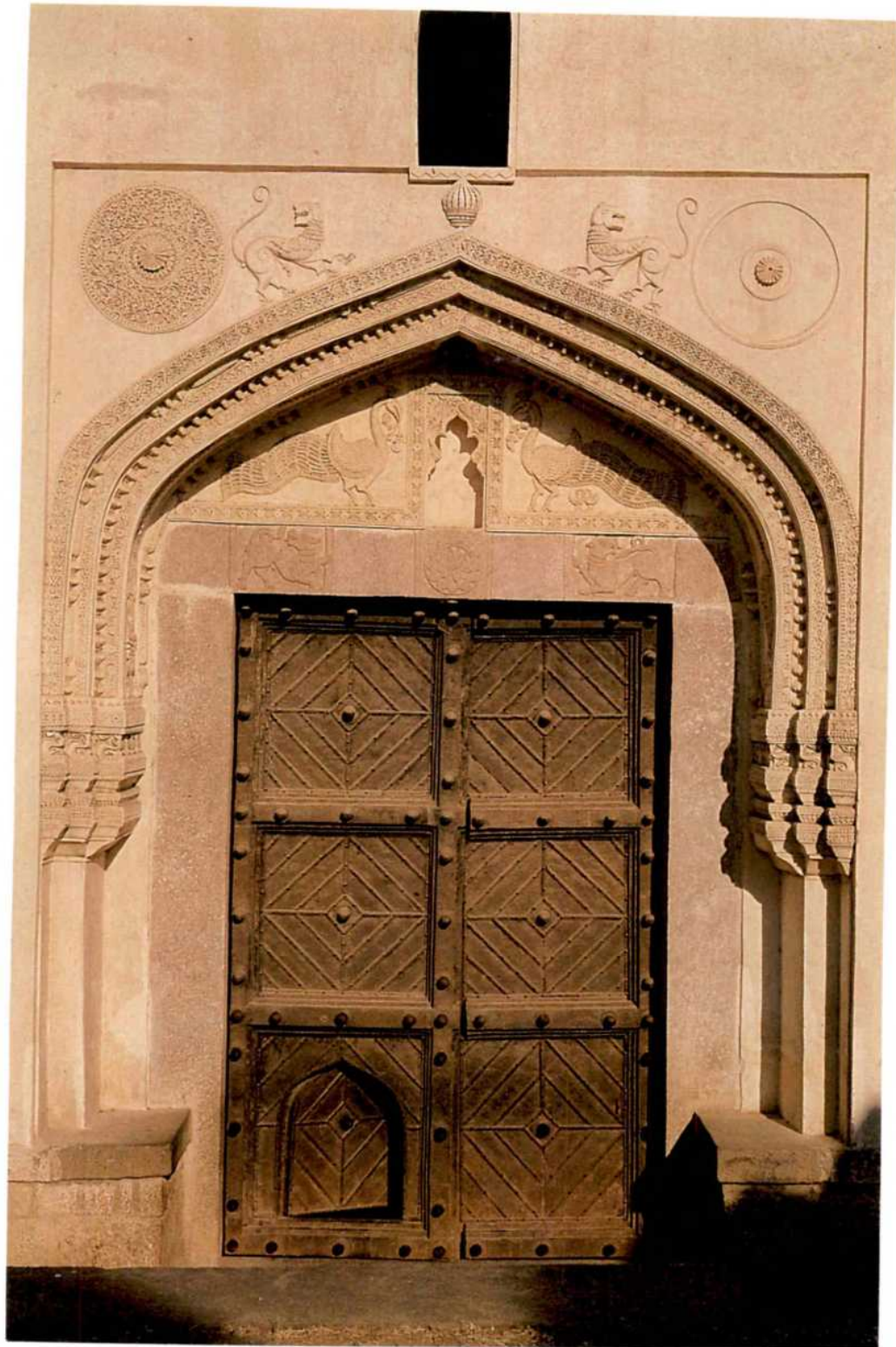
Banjara Gate Façade, Golconda Fort. Photo: Lois Safrani.



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*Saroonagar Palace, Ante Room. Hyderabad. Albumen print. C. 1891.
Photo: Raja Deen Dayal. Courtesy Phillips Antiques, Bombay.*



Main Gate, Golconda Fort. Photo: Anil A. Dave/Dinodia Picture Agency, Bombay.

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*Young Hyderabad Prince. Albumen print. Photo: S. Dhunjeebhoy,
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The Qutb Shabs Of Golconda

Volume XLIV No. 1

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Cover: *Equestrian Portrait of Sultan Abdullab Quth Shab of Golconda*. Golconda. Mid-seventeenth century. Sotheby's, New York City. Photo: courtesy Sotheby's, New York City.

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Acknowledgements

Inexplicably, no major exhibition in Hyderabad or abroad marked the 400th anniversary of the founding of this great city on the Deccan Plateau in 1591. Neither did philatelic issues appear. There is reason, indeed, for celebrating Hyderabad today as a cosmopolitan centre in South India where people of varied backgrounds and ideologies have long thrived. Many others have discovered a haven here, a respite from pressures of a different kind prevalent elsewhere in the country.

I am particularly indebted to Marg Publications in accepting my suggestion and proceeding with the printing of this volume.

I proposed the idea for this volume to Dr Pratapaditya Pal, Senior Curator of Indian and Southeast Asian Art, Los Angeles County Museum of Art, who catalyzed it with Marg Publications. I am grateful to Dr Pal and appreciative of his introducing me to the late Mrs Roshan Sabavala and Mrs Sudha Seshadri of Marg Publications.

I resolved to simply do my utmost because of my profound commitment to the city. It may not be understood by some. As Kipling writes in *Sussex*,

God gave all men all earth to love,
But since our hearts are small,
Ordained for each, one spot shall prove
Beloved over all.

For several years, I have been blessed with the continued encouragement and support of such precious friends as Ameerunnisa Begum, Suraiya Hasan, Darina Silone, and Father Vincent T. O'Keefe S. J.

Dr Rajendra Prasad, Director of The State Archives, Government of Andhra Pradesh, Hyderabad, made the research and documentation process a delight by providing access to the Andhra Pradesh State Archives. He and his official staff were immensely cordial and always helpful, answering just about every question. During the summer and monsoon of 1991, Dr Rajendra Prasad acted as Director of Archaeology and Museums, Department of Archaeology, Government of Andhra Pradesh, Hyderabad. In this capacity also, the team of officers he headed were generous with their time and enabled me to proceed smoothly with my research. The photographers attached to the government's Department of Archaeology were equally congenial. It was a pleasure to have established such close ties.

I thank the Curator of the State Museum, Department of Archaeology, Government of Andhra Pradesh, for helping me and to his staff for cooperating in photographing various objects from its staggering collection.

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Iqbalunnisa Begum and Mumtaz Hasan procured permission for my working freely within the religious site completed inside the *deori* of Nawab Sir Salar Jung I, Bargah Hazrat Abbas. Members of the late Nawab Suleyman Ali Khan's family, specially his youngest son, Nawab Mir Murtaza Ali Khan, have for several years supported my efforts at documenting various aspects of Hyderabad city. He shared his astute knowledge of parts of it that are virtually inaccessible and I am touched by his friendship and kindness.

Ullas Mukhim from Maharashtra travelled to the most remote parts of Hyderabad under trying conditions and cheerfully shot some of the finest photographs. His wife too helped with various problems. Abbas Ali and his wife Sakina were instrumental in my meeting the Mukhims and in several ways, Abbas and Sakina took this project through one difficult stage after another, always supportive and ever smiling. Without Abbas, I would have been severely handicapped. My profuse thanks to all of them—they are symbolic of the best Hyderabad still offers.

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went out of their way getting me a typewriter, introducing me to various scholars, lending me books from their ancestral library, and always encouraging me; Aziza and her late father, Syed Mehdi Ali, who bequeathed a rare book of Nawab Siraj Yar Jung to me; Sarwath Azam, who told us fascinating tales and vignettes about the Qutb Shahs and their various sites in Golconda and Hyderabad; Hafiz & Mohiq, Booksellers at The Chowk, probably the finest source for books on Hyderabad and its erudite director who works out of the smallest premises but is a goldmine of information; Birjees Barakat and Rummy Khariwalla of Air-India, New York; Shaha Husain; Dr Shehnaz and Shahid Malik Khan.

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Nabil Saidi, Expert-in-Charge, Fine Oriental Manuscripts and Miniatures, Islamic Art Department, Sotheby's, London, provided a colour transparency of a rare Qutb Shahi painting. I thank him for his trouble and I acknowledge Sotheby's in London for their gracious permission.

Carol Conover, Head of Sotheby's Chinese Works of Art, was particularly understanding. Lark E. Mason Jr., and Jiyoung Koo, who work with her at Sotheby's in New York City, provided me with illustrations. To all of them, who helped me out, my profuse thanks. Here also, I am most grateful to Sotheby's for their excellent pictures and their gracious permission to use them.

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Carlton C. Rochell Jr., Head of the Indian, Himalayan, and Southeast Asian Art Department at Sotheby's in New York helped me tremendously with information and pictures. I thank him and express my indebtedness to Sotheby's in New York for their kind permission to use their pictures.

Colonel Raj K. Tandon, possibly among the last of the great humanists still living in Hyderabad, personified the civilized traditions of the highest order that India offers. He gave me *carte blanche* with his stupendous collection and I was simply enchanted to study numerous rare paintings and works of art here.

Two individuals closest to me bore with me most patiently in the working on this book: my wife Lois, an American professional photographer and our only child, Alexei.

In professional humility, I wish to express that I have learned a great deal from Lois and come to marvel the stoical ideals she has long espoused.

I made presumptuous demands of her photographic skills and ideas, which Lois shared happily. However, the inclusion of her work here is solely my responsibility and is done entirely for professional rather than personal reasons. All the same, I am most indebted to Lois for sharing my enthusiasm for the arts of India, my obsession with my country, and the love I have long nurtured for my city, Hyderabad, and my Shaivite state, Andhra Pradesh. I was privileged in crossing the paths of some of the most extraordinary individuals I have ever known, all of them women of outstanding calibre: Nanna (Fakhr'ul Hajia, the Begum Amir Hasan); Sarojini Devi and her daughter, Padmaja Naidu; Dr Elizabeth Kochler Wasu; Madame Alys Ali Hydari; and, two men, Manna-san (Ambassador A. H. Safrani), and Bavasab (The Honourable Dr Bankat Chandra); all of whom, sadly for me, are now dead. I knew them in Hyderabad.

Indeed, to a portion of the noble Indian soil, a city of near oblivion, this is still a humble tribute. Hyderabad is an intrinsic part of India to which I am proud to belong.

Shehbaz H. Safrani, 1991.



The Char Minar, Hyderabad. Albumen Print. C. 1888. Photo: Raja Deen Dayal. Courtesy: Phillips Antiques, Bombay.

The Chronology of the House of Qutb Shah: (1512-1687)

Quli Qutb Shah: 1445-1543

Jamsheed Quli Qutb Shah:

(Ascended) 1543-1550

Subhan Quli Qutb Shah:

(Ascended, reigned only seven months) 1550

Ibrahim Quli Qutb Shah: 1530-1580

Muhammad Quli Qutb Shah:

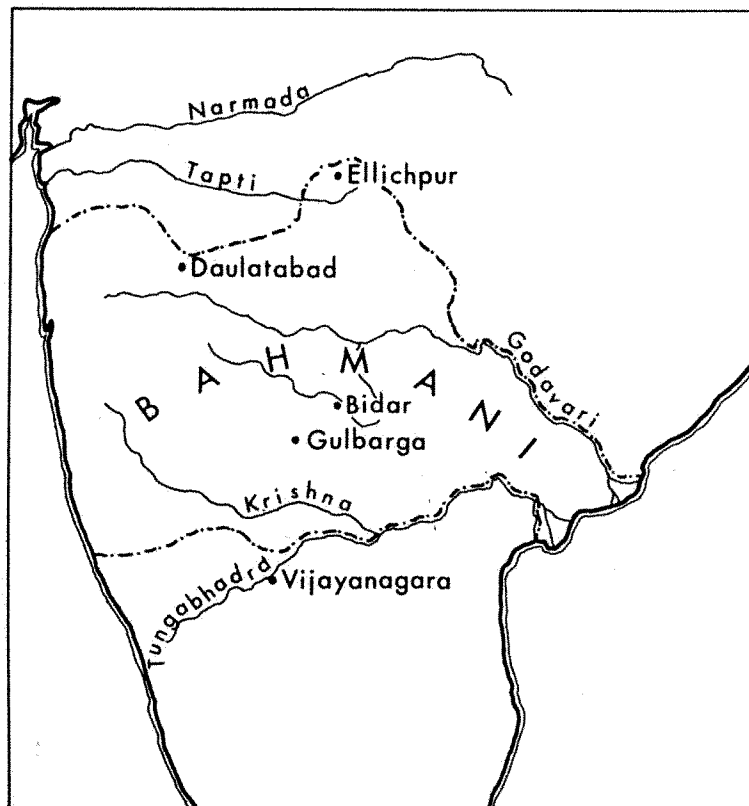
(The founder of Hyderabad) 1566-1612

Muhammad Qutb Shah: 1593-1626

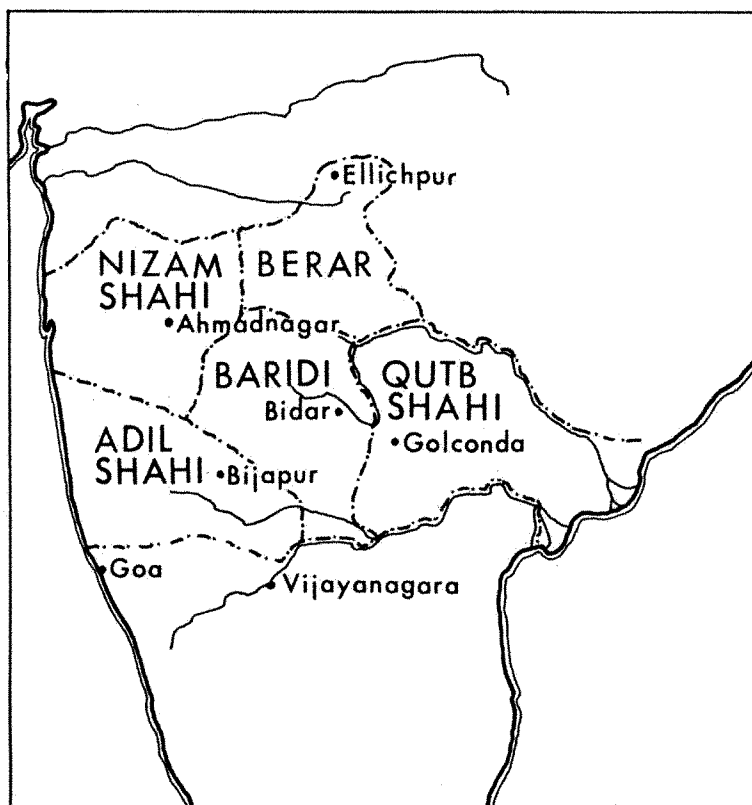
Abdullah Qutb Shah: 1614-1672

Abul Hasan:

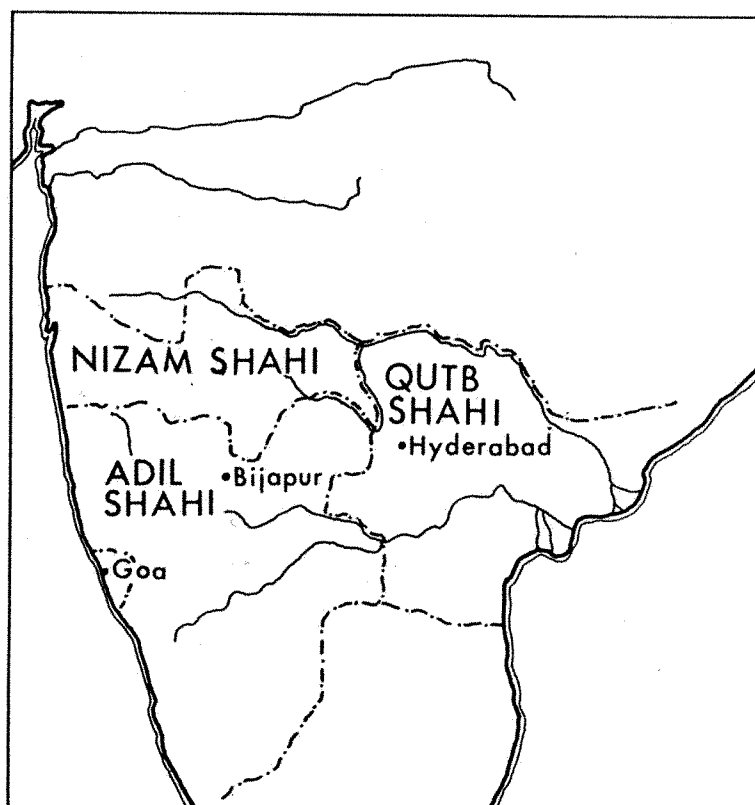
(Tana Shah; regnal dates) 1672-1687



1400



1525



1675

The Deccan

A Nucleus Of Culture

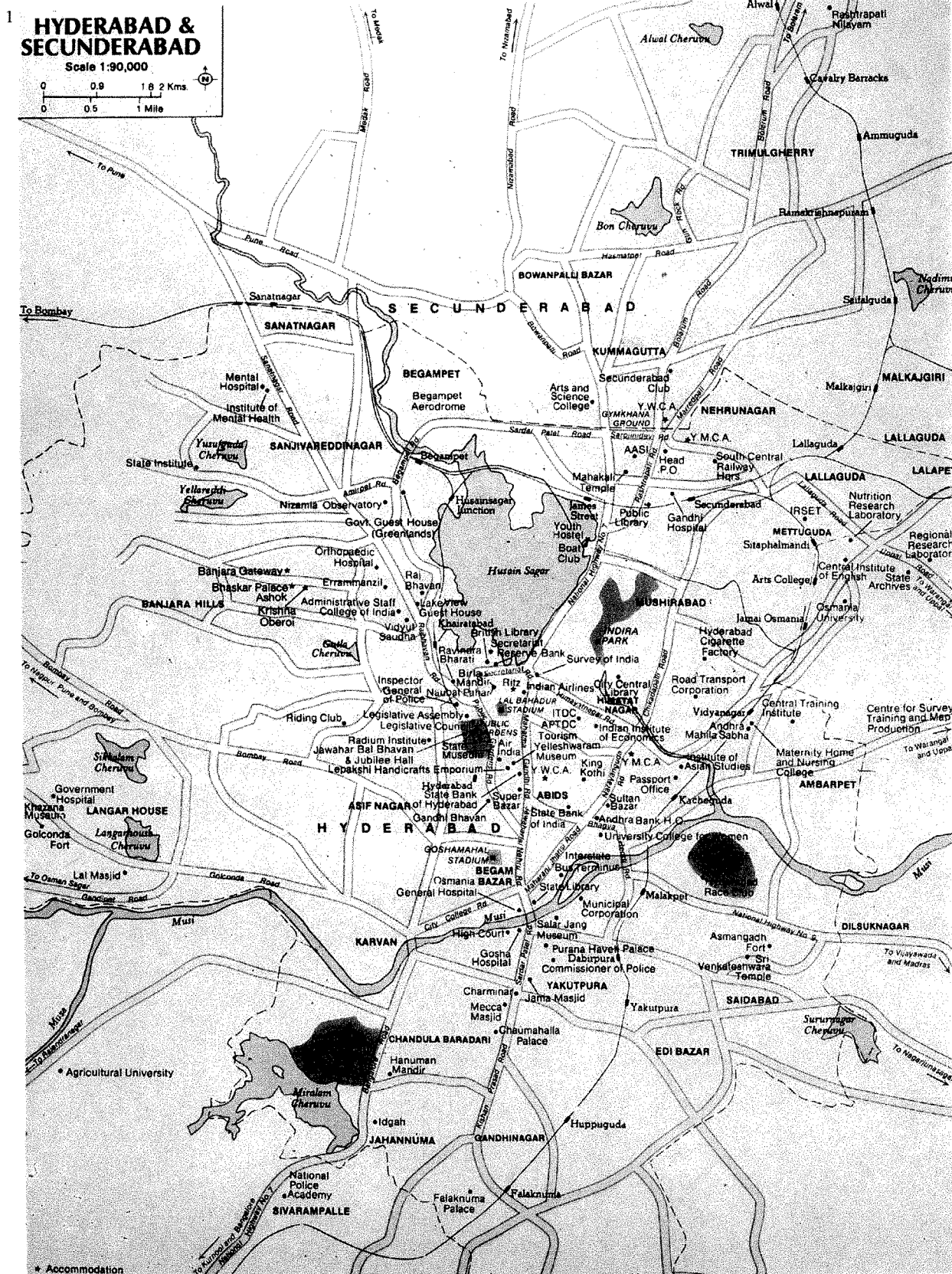
—*Shehbaz H. Safrani*

Hyderabad will always have a special place in my heart. From the beginning, growing up fatherless, deep within me I treasured an abiding love for the city of my birth. Today, following four decades of the closest rapport with the soil of India and Hyderabad specially, I continue to experience a profound passion for and a sense of commitment to the city. Such a sacred bond can be explained as almost Tolstoyesque. Though I am obsessed with India, my motherland, the essential sense of nurturing and bonding is centred in Hyderabad, capital of the state of Andhra Pradesh.

A Historical Background of the Qutb Shahs

Muhammad Quli Qutb Shah (1566-1612), fifth sovereign of the House of Qutb Shah (1512-1687), founded the city of Hyderabad in 1591.

The Qutb Shahs traced the genesis of their imperial legacy to the Bahmani kingdom (1347-1525) of Gulbarga and Bidar, also located on the Deccan Plateau in peninsular India. During the twilight years of the Bahmani realm, with a gradual disintegration, there evolved five new independent kingdoms in the Deccan.



“The Capital City of this Kingdom is called Bagnagar [from the Urdu word Bagh or garden], the Persians call it Aider-abad; it is fourteen or fifteen leagues from Viziapour situated in the latitude of seventeen degrees ten minutes, in a very long plain, hemmed in with little hills, some cossees distant from the town, which makes the air of that place very wholesome, besides that, the country of Golconda lies very high.”

—Thévenot

1. Contemporary Map of Hyderabad. Government of India copyright. Photo: Ullas Mukhim.

Berar

The House of Imad Shah (1484-1568) of Berar, established its capital at Ellichpur. Little can be said of their cultural achievements.

Bijapur

The House of Adil Shah (1489-1660) founded its dynasty, renowned for its exemplary architecture and gloriously vibrant palette of painting.

Ahmednagar

The House of Nizam Shah (1490-1633) had its capital at Ahmednagar, the northernmost in the Deccan, and of which very little remains other than some ruins and rare paintings and drawings. The kingdom was noted for its queen Chand Bibi (active 1580-1600) who defended the city against the advancing Mughal troops of Akbar (1542-1605). Equestrian portraits of Chand Bibi portray her virtually flying across the page of illuminated Deccani manuscripts; the painters demonstrating rare instances of a liberated attitude towards women and not just the stereotyped image of them as ordinary women of the harems. Chand Bibi is among a minuscule group of historic Indian women, who stood up against the wrath of men, and such paintings of this impressive queen provide clues to a liberal life-style of the Deccan.

Malik Ambar, the Prime Minister of Ahmednagar (1600-1625) was a black African from Ethiopia who was a significant personality. An extraordinary intellectual, though despotic and feudal, he was perfectly suited to thwart the territorial ambitions of the Mughal emperor Jehangir (1569-1627) against Ahmednagar and the Deccan. The man whom Jehangir found "odious", featured in a number of striking portraits: sombre, introverted but of an immensely athletic build. Despite his dark and foreboding appearance Malik Ambar strikes one as a shrewd politician and more than a match for the Mughals.

Bidar

The House of Bareed Shah (1492-1609), centred in Bidar, achieved equal renown for its fabled fort and architecture. But it is for the highly sought-after decorative art objects, executed in *bidri*, a black metalware inlaid with silver, that Bidar continues being remembered today.

Bidar and its fort stand in ruins, but what heroic ruins of a bygone age! All it requires is about a three-hour-long car journey from Hyderabad to visit the Bidar Fort, its mausoleums, and the very small museum simply to conjure up the magnificent scale of construction commissioned by the Bareed Shahs.

Linked aesthetically, *bidri* ware entered the Golconda art market, later finding its way to Hyderabad, then maintaining its artistic hegemony throughout the centuries to the present times, when Nizams from the House of Asaf Jah (1724-1948) ruled over the Deccan from their capital, built first by the Qutb Shahs.

Due to excessive bureaucracy and indifferent heads of crafts, directly or indirectly on the government payroll, *bidri* ware has declined in quality of late. Still, one or two master craftsmen of *bidri* ware survive today, whose aesthetic standards are awesome.

Golconda and Hyderabad

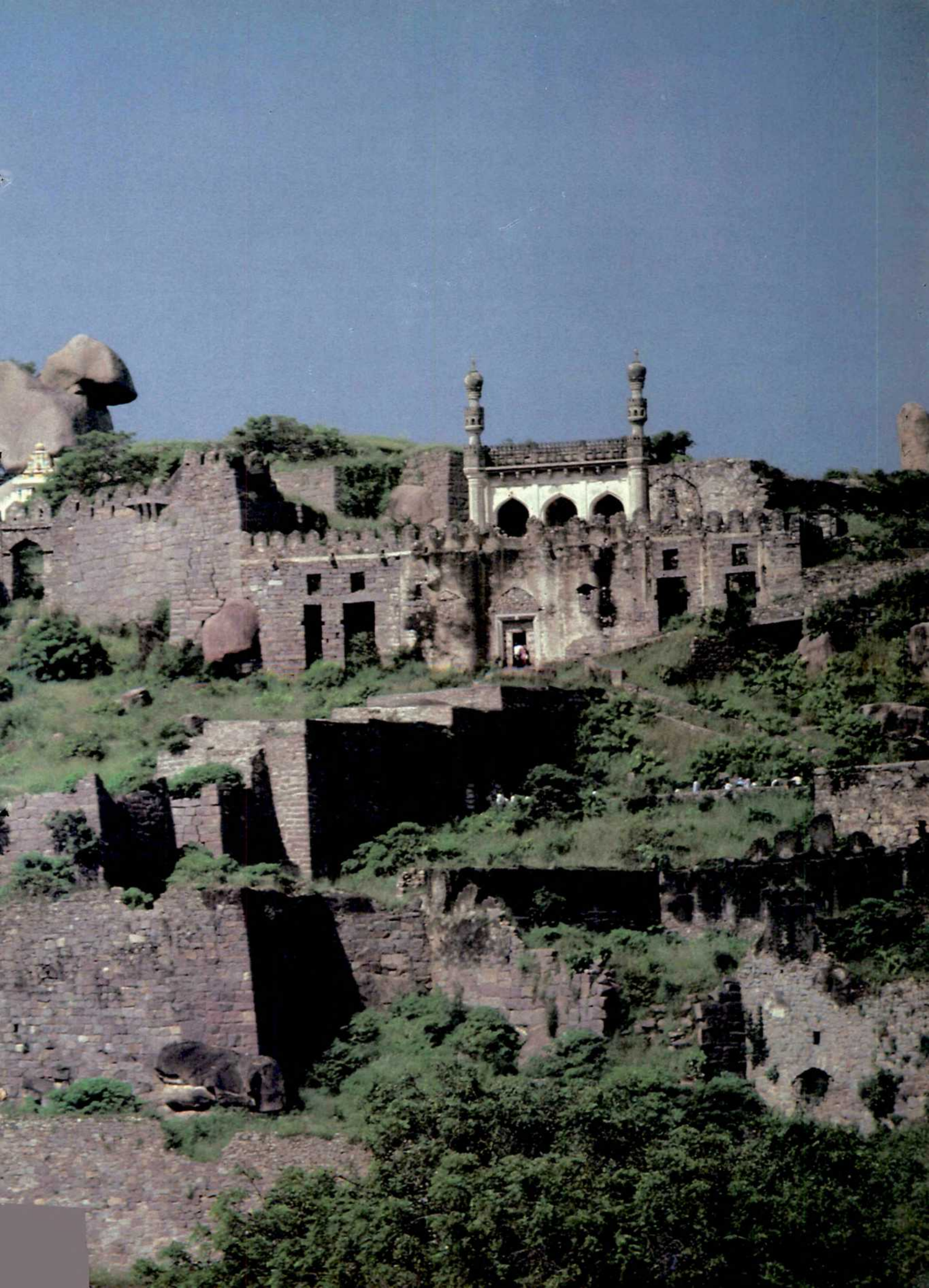
Of the House of the Qutb Shahs of Golconda the reign of Muhammad Quli constitutes a high point in the history of art and literature. Muhammad Quli Qutb Shah (1566-1612), fifth sovereign of the House of Qutb Shah (1512-1687), towers above the Muslim nobility that ruled over the Deccan between the sixteenth and mid-twentieth centuries.

Tall, thin, and rather sensitive in appearance, Muhammad Quli can be recognized only from a single, undisputed contemporary portrait. Broad-shouldered, dressed elegantly, two rosebuds clenched in his left hand, the Deccani sword resting in his right, a row of flowers in the foreground, this handsome king who sported a neatly clipped moustache, exudes majesty. A great king, known for his contributions to the civilization of Golconda and the culture of Hyderabad, he was endowed with tremendous creative energy. He put it all to exceptionally pragmatic purposes and, best of all, nurtured grand visions of humanism.

Born at Vijayanagar, an enlightened Hindu kingdom in South India, Muhammad Quli was

2. Golconda Fort. Balahisar. Photo: Lois Safrani.





raised in a cultural milieu where aesthetics, patronage, and cultural achievement ranked very high and tolerance was second nature. His father, Ibrahim Quli Qutb Shah (1530-1580), had taken refuge at the Vijayanagar court. Muhammad Quli's mother, Bhagirati, was considered a blue-blooded princess of the royal house of Vijayanagar. In any case, their son turned out to be precocious, a gifted linguist, at ease with Telugu spoken among the citizens of Golconda, and Persian spoken at court in Golconda and later, in Hyderabad. In addition, he was a most inspired conversationalist, championing the cause of Dakhni, a unique language derived from Persian and Urdu.

With his ardour for poetry, the fifth sovereign of Golconda composed poems in Dakhni, spoke this dialect with the zeal of a benign convert, and throughout his brief life of forty-six years, remained curious about life, enamoured of nature, and always, open-minded. The suffering he bore in familial privacy while sharing in the grief of his exiled parents at Vijayanagar, has been borne out in the remarkable poems he wrote. Reminiscing on his days at Vijayanagar contributed to his emancipated ideals of governing Golconda. Remembered for his egalitarian rule based on the principle of equal justice for all, beloved of his subjects, he is acknowledged by the rarest of contemporary attributes — immortality.

In good times and in bad, with or without pomp and circumstance, the birthday of Muhammad Quli continues being celebrated in Hyderabad to this day. Reciting poems and lyrics called *ghazals*, poets and scholars of differing ideologies, political persuasions, and faiths, congregate to mark the birthday. This Golconda monarch's poetic rainbow touched and delighted nearly everyone who came in contact with it.

In the sixteenth, seventeenth, and early eighteenth centuries, the House of Qutb Shah enjoyed a close rapport with Safavid Persia. At Golconda and Hyderabad, through the tenure of the House of Asaf Jah, Persian served as the court language. Painters, scholars, artisans, calligraphers, and travellers from Central Asia and Persia in particular, arrived at Golconda which was renowned for its patronage. These were highly talented individuals who, when Deccani patronage declined, turned north and later sought work in provincial Mughal, Rajput, and Sikh ateliers.

Sunni Muslims, inclined towards orthodoxy and in any event condescending to Shia rulers of the Deccan, the Mughals watched events in the Deccan with considerable dismay. Princes from the House of Timur (1526-1857) and the Mughals tried in vain to conquer the Deccan. Rather than finding rapport with the Mughals, the Qutb Shahs felt inextricably linked with the Hindu population. The Qutb Shahs did the unthinkable when they extended themselves to the abhorrent enemies of the Mughals, the valiant Marathas.

Disciplined and organized by their dynamic leader Shivaji (1630-1680), who knew the Deccan like the lines on his palm, the Maratha clansmen grew closer to Golconda. The extraordinary wealth of Golconda was more than sufficient reason for Mughal attacks. These happened repeatedly; with some marriages ensuing between the Mughal and the Deccani courts. None of these assuaged the worst apprehensions in the Deccan: complete Mughal subjugation of the entire Deccan.

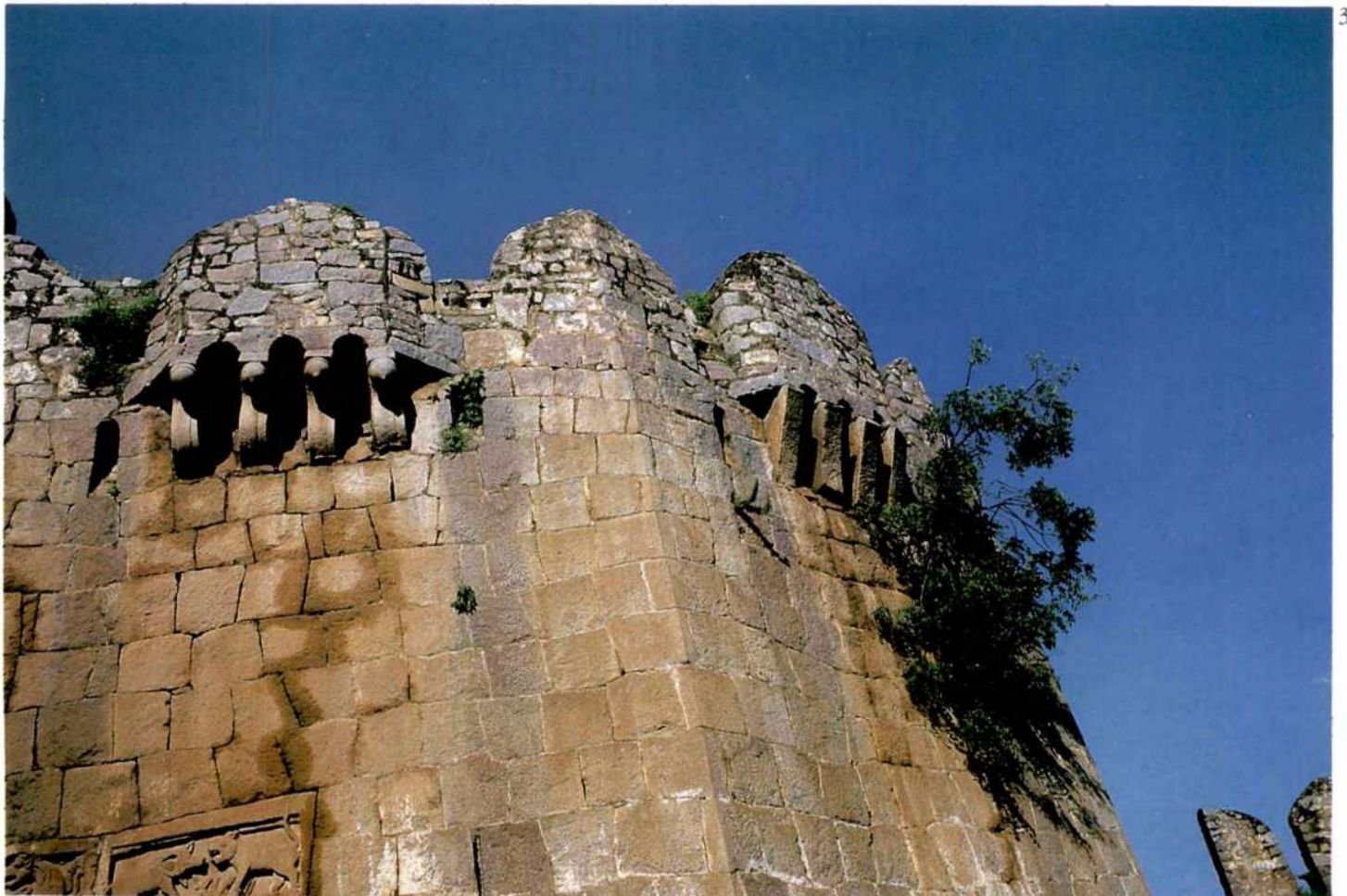
When Shivaji visited Golconda, where he was welcomed warmly and received graciously, Mughal vexation with the House of Qutb Shah turned to anathema. Interestingly enough, several artisans, called Bhavsars (their descendants continuing to speak Marathi), arrived with Shivaji. A residual community of Bhavsars still survives under dire circumstances in Medak, over two hundred kilometres outside Hyderabad.

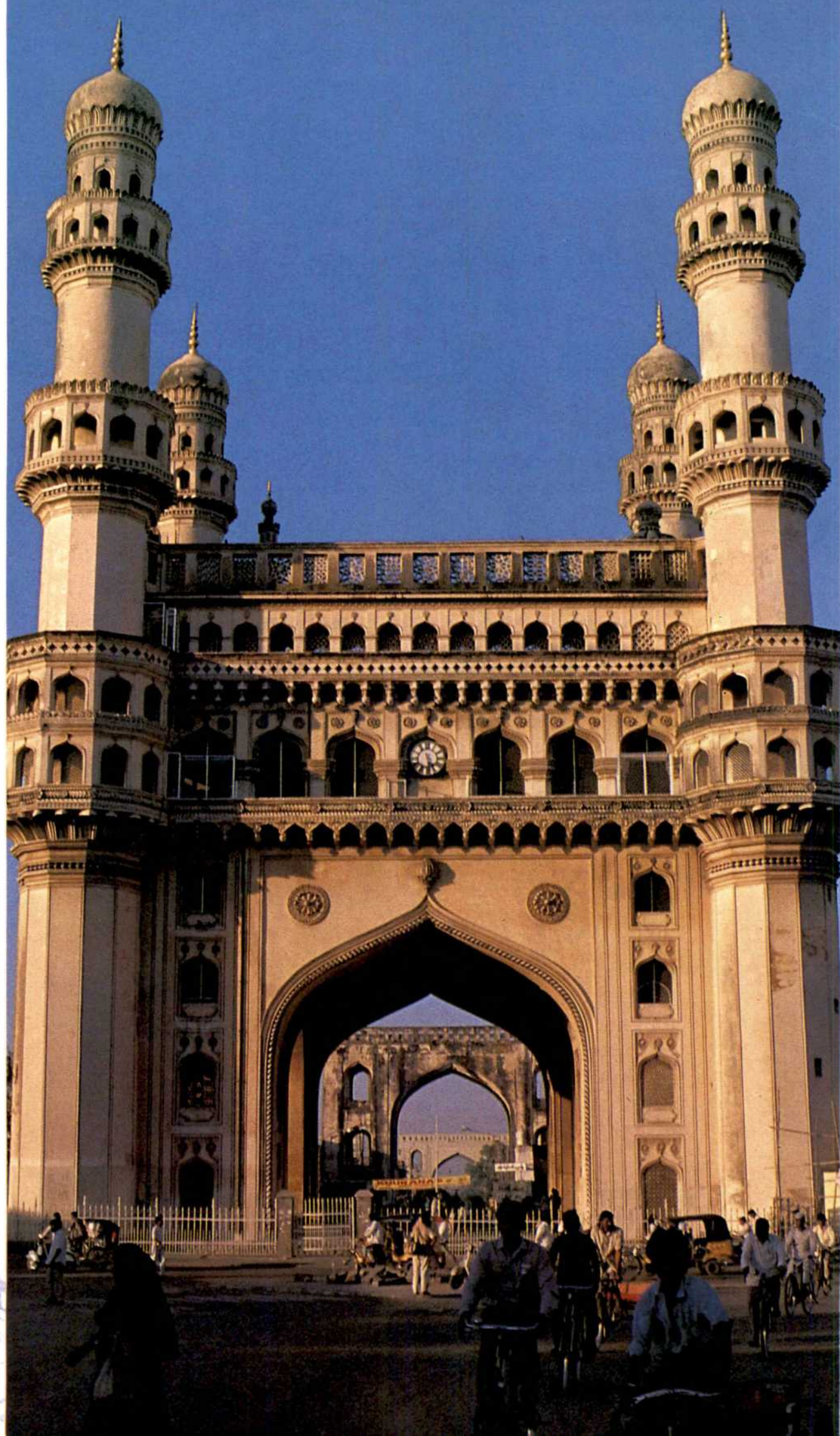
Attracted to the south of the Vindhya range that defines a geographic division of India, Emperor Aurangzeb (1618-1707) established an imperial presence in the region just north of the Deccan Plateau. At Daulatabad where the formidable fort surrounded by a deep moat, soaring skywards seems like a tiered cake from a distance, Aurangzeb incarcerated his enemies. Nearby, he founded another site where there is an abundance of water, naming the city after himself — Aurangabad.

Meanwhile, in 1687, Aurangzeb began attacking Golconda Fort, the seat of the Qutb

3. Golconda Fort Façade.
C. sixteenth century. Photo:
Lois Safrani.

The nerve centre of the Golconda kingdom was the fort, also called Golconda, a walled city, whose ramparts and ruined glory remain standing today. Virtually impregnable, constructed over decades since the early sixteenth century, such walls required great toil to build. The Qutb Shahs, always keen to preserve nature, utilized massive boulders for protection.





It has been suggested that Hyderabad's major landmark, the Charminar, was an inspirational centre-piece built to celebrate the end of a dreadful plague. When Muhammad Quli's kingdom came to be blighted by such an epidemic of alarming proportions, the desperate ruler requested Allah for help, pleading for pity on his dying subjects. Kneeling at the spot marked as the centre of his new city, he vowed to erect "a magnificent monument on this very site, so all people may remember and respect, forever, your wondrous powers and inestimable kindness". When the tragedy miraculously ended days later Muhammad Quli honoured his promise, constructing the stately edifice — his thanksgiving gesture.



4. The Charminar. Hyderabad. 1591. Stone dressed in stucco. Photo: Anand Udesi.

5. Detail of the Charminar. Photo: Anand Udesi.



6



7



6. *Buffaloes in Combat*.
Bijapur. C. 1625. Marble
drawing with colour added.
Navin Kumar Collection, New
York City. Photo: Taurgo.

7. *Wedding Procession of
Sultan Abdullah Qutb Shah of
Golconda*. Golconda. C. 1630.
Sotheby's, London. Photo:
courtesy Sotheby's, London.

“As
for the Kingdom of
Golconda, Qutb
Shah maintains with
great zeal the law of
the Shias, and as
the nobles of his
Court are nearly all
Persians, they
observe the customs
of the sect of the
Shias with the same
strictness and the
same freedom from
restraint as in
Persia.”

—Thevenot²



8. *A Persian Prince*. Golconda. 1675. Navin Kumar Collection, New York City. Photo: Navin Kumar Collection, New York City.

Shahs. On one occasion, a devastating assault by the Mughals demolished an entire section of Golconda's high stone walls. Overnight, Golconda painters celebrated like their Bijapuri counterparts, created paper that resembled marble and before dawn covered the broken section. Viewed from a distance, the segment of the ruined wall appeared intact to Mughal surveyors. The portal nearest this wall subsequently became the wallpaper door, *Kaghiz-ka-darwaza*. Seldom in its fascinating history of interior decor has paper served such a strategic purpose and, in fact, saved a people from annihilation. *Faux marbre* techniques at Golconda and neighbouring Bijapur resurrected Islamic prestige in paper-making and the elaborate skills demonstrating the ability to handle it.

An unhappy monarch, troubled and temperamental, Aurangzeb languished outside the impregnable Golconda Fort for a period of eight months of anxiety. Cognizant of bribing, endemic to every age of history down to the last quarter of the present century, the Mughals paid an avaricious guard.

Surreptitiously a gate opened, the Mughals entered, and marked the end of the golden age of the House of Qutb Shah. Though not until the fanatically loyal and devoted black African guards of Golconda battled the Mughals with demonic fury. A chivalrous group, indebted and dedicated to the sovereigns of Golconda, the Africans thought nothing of dying with their swords clenched in their strong hands in a final massacre. Some kilometres from Golconda Fort, during the reign of the Nizams of Hyderabad, descendants of these African guards joined others and cultivated orchards at Maisrum, whose fruits had a delicious ambrosial flavour.

Falstaff-like, bearded, a highly affectionate, and warm-hearted sovereign, Abul Hasan (reigned 1672-1687), was incarcerated at Daulatabad. Surviving twelve long years in his dark world of imprisonment, he died there.

Qutb Shahi Capitals: Golconda and Hyderabad

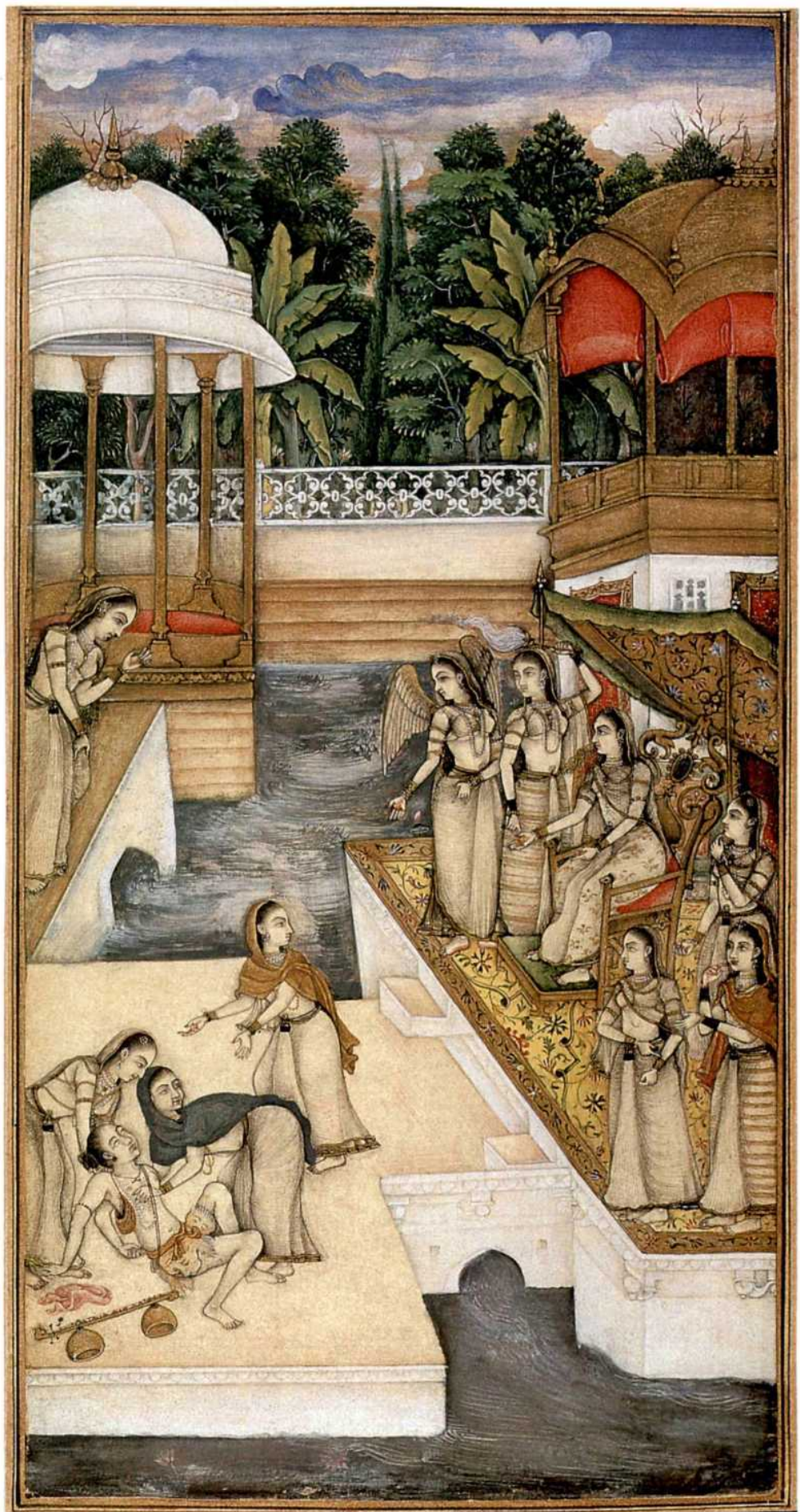
Located in peninsular India, landscaped with wild rock formations — boulders of immense size — the Deccan Plateau has a countryside verging on the idyllic. For those attracted to metaphysics and such esoteric ideals as those of Sufi mysticism as the Qutb Shahs of Golconda espoused, the environs of Golconda provided one of the richest realms for the imagination. As both drawings and paintings executed at Golconda between the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries reveal, the patrons and the painters rose to this remarkable setting and captured its spirit in the Deccani art of Golconda.

With its varied geography, blessed with rivers and lakes, the Deccan Plateau rises some six hundred metres above sea-level. The dry climate, with periodic aridity proved a blessing for individuals suffering from bone ailments and impaired lungs. The hills around Golconda and Hyderabad contained another secret that has long lured others to these parts, a perennial breeze. The soothing effects of these delightful breezes that arrived suddenly and just as readily died away, invited architectural patrons to create wide corridors, open portals, and large atriums.

Sincerely dedicated to the Deccan and rooted in Golconda, virtually all the members of the ruling House of Qutb Shah contributed to the edification of their realm. The abundance of beautiful Qutb Shahi ruins remains a romantic's dream waiting to be discovered. The Qutb Shahs distinguished themselves with their civic projects that included man-made lakes, reservoirs, roads linking parts of their kingdom to Golconda and Hyderabad, and completing a superb water supply system.

The nerve centre of the Golconda kingdom was the fort, also called Golconda, a walled city, whose ramparts and ruined glory remain standing today. Virtually impregnable, constructed over decades since the early sixteenth century, such walls required great toil to build. The Qutb Shahs, always keen to preserve nature, utilized massive boulders for protection.

The granite structures of Golconda happened to create a haven. But the population of the citadel town posed demographic problems endemic to such late medieval town



9. *A Palatial Setting*. Golconda. 1680. Navin Kumar Collection, New York City. Photo: Navin Kumar Collection, New York City.

planning. Ubiquitous problems arose: overcrowding, limited natural resources, and the consequent danger to health.

Muhammad Quli commissioned blueprints on an unprecedented scale to build the new capital, Hyderabad, ten kilometres from Golconda. Mir Mumin Astrabadi (active 1585-1624), Abu Talib, Kamaluddin Shirazi, and Shehar Yar Jahan were assigned to construct Hyderabad's monuments, palaces, administrative buildings, landscape gardens, and enhance civic pride through architectural projects that eventually became landmarks of the Qutb Shahi imperial age. These plans were completed and the architects and town planners working individually or as a team, brought to life the beautiful city whose architectural splendour earned a place as a legend in the annals of architecture.

Conceived as a garden emulating an earthly paradise, an ideal long cherished among some thoughtful and seminal Muslim rulers, Hyderabad grew by the sandy banks of the River Musi, serving the kingdom of Golconda.

The Charminar symbolizes the architectural genius of Muhammad Quli. Secular, though a mosque stands atop this monument with four towers (*minars*) but is concealed from view at ground level, the Charminar functioned exactly in the manner of Roman triumphal arches, such as those in Benevento and Rome.

With its dignified statement and stuccoed façade coloured light ochre, the Charminar soared high, way above other architectural complexes within its vicinity. The sprawling Qutb Shahi palaces, handsome buildings with terraced gardens — some of which housed a network of bureaucratic officialdom — arterial roads with canals and fountains...everything was dwarfed by the Charminar. And that was how it was probably meant to be viewed by posterity.

Until the mid-twentieth century, Hyderabad retained much of its old charm. Qutb Shahi architecture continued to exist along with newer architectural styles which for the most part kept the onion-domed façades and pointed arches, while manifesting elements acquired from Mughal and Rajput India to the north and north-west of the Deccan Plateau.

Sadly, few of the municipal and royal domains of the Qutb Shahs remain in the city today. The residual Qutb Shahi architecture in Hyderabad is camouflaged by new construction resulting from excessive laxity in maintaining metropolitan Hyderabad's architectural integrity. Through all these vicissitudes there remains Muhammad Quli, enjoying posthumous fame for the enlightened patronage he brought to his city and burnishing the name of his noble House of the Qutb Shahs.

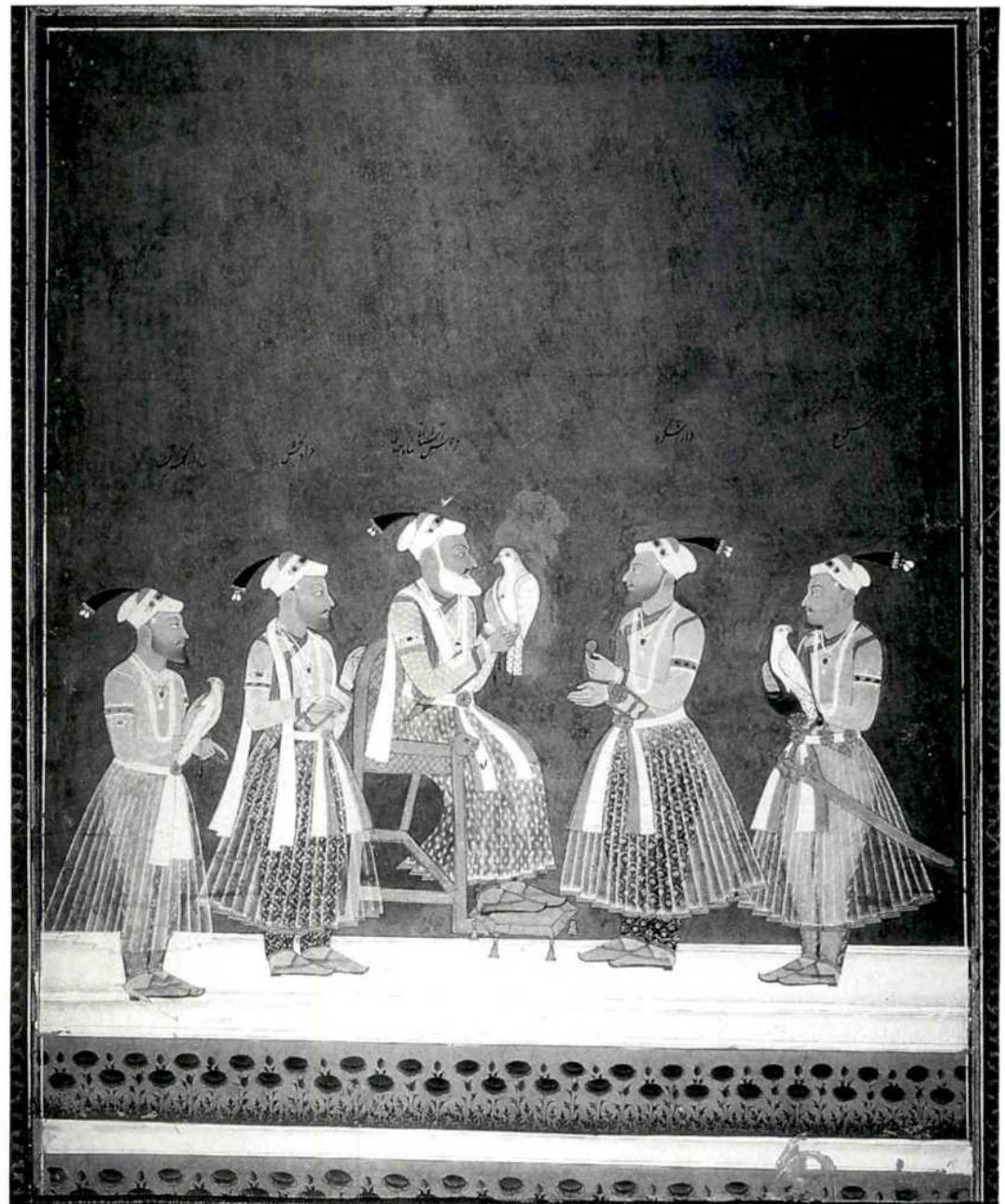
The city and the Charminar above all else, reveal the civilized, educated, aesthetic ideals of this extraordinary sovereign. He died prematurely, when barely in his early forties and his tomb, also in the environs of Golconda Fort, reflects the aspirations and ambitions of an immensely talented man.

Intriguing stories and legends about Hyderabad abound. One of them suggests the existence of a secret underground route between Golconda and Hyderabad. Along this uncharted route, between Golconda Fort and Hyderabad city, are some dome-shaped structures, meant for a courier or other messengers using this underground passage to surface, inhale fresh air and either continue on their fugitive path, or make a safe exit.

Cultural Synthesis of Hyderabad

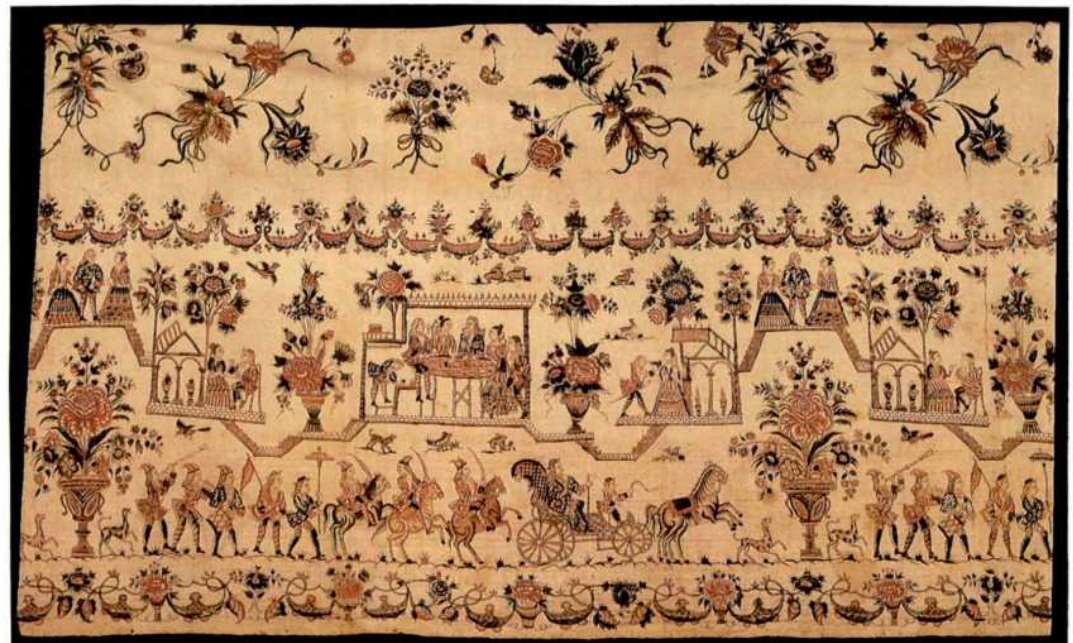
The culture and civilization of Hyderabad since its founding has been one of synthesis. Hindus, traditionally known for their largesse and compassion, formed the majority of the Deccan. Muslims, who founded Gulbarga, Bidar, Berar, Bijapur, Ahmednagar, Golconda, and Hyderabad, ruled as a minority. The humanism of the two cultures blended — some inter-community marriages took place, such as that of Ibrahim Quli Qutb Shah and Bhagirati. Similar nuptial ties fostered a greater understanding and Hyderabad exemplified a cultural synthesis, where harmony prevailed among all its citizens.

Jawaharlal Nehru, whose lofty ideals touched many in contemporary India, cited Hyderabad as the meeting-place — *adda* as they say in Hyderabad — for Hindu and



10. Emperor Shah Jahan with his Four Sons. Left to right: Aurangzeb, Murad Baksh, Shah Jahan, Dara Shikoh, and Shuja. Golconda. 1680. Navin Kumar Collection, New York City.

11. Procession of Figures, Guests Seated at Tables, Urns, Floral Bouquets, and Various Animals. South India. Mid-eighteenth century. Indian painted cotton; height: 1.7 metres, width: 84 metres. Cora Ginsberg, New York City. Photo: Cora Ginsberg.



Muslim cultures. Hyderabad achieved a high watermark for integration, a symbiosis featuring prominently in the thinking of its founder.

A Catharsis in the Deccan

Muslim by birth, Shia by faith, the sultanates of the Deccan experienced a catharsis at one stage of their dynastic rule. Internecine clashes, feudal claims, and despotic *coups d'état* reduced these kingdoms. Once, when they united against Vijayanagar, the results proved overpowering. Established in the isolated region of the Deccan, the sultanate rulers were responsible for art and architectural marvels created on a grand scale.

The ruins and such residual evidence as can be discovered today, reveal this architectural obsession to have been governed with refinement. The architecture, the painting, and the decorative arts executed in the Deccan during the long reign of these Shia sultans are a resounding tribute to this Deccani civilization.

In this live-and-let-live ideal, a number of saints, such as Saint Akbar Shah Kalimullah Hussaini, who enjoyed the friendship of the last sovereign of Golconda, and Abul Hasan (reigned 1672-1687, died 1699), thrived in the kingdom of Qutb Shahs. Attired to emulate Golconda royalty, Mark Zebrowski states that the "regal dress is meant to symbolize inner glory". (*Deccani Painting*, London, Sotheby's, 1983, pp. 192-193).

How these enterprising individuals from remote corners of Central Asia, some with Persian links, entered and established their respective seats of power in a nearly desolate region of the subcontinent, the Deccan Plateau, has yet to be scrutinized thoroughly. Nomadic in origin like their counterparts, the House of Osman (1299-1919) or the Ottoman Turks, these Deccani patricians enjoyed themselves here. The isolation probably suited them and, eager to build a home for themselves and their descendants, they commissioned buildings for secular and religious needs. In both instances, their architecture marks a triumph of will, creating a style that is still unique. And these architectural ruins themselves, located in now secluded and sparsely populated parts of the Deccan Plateau, are a romantic haven for the contemporary tourist, although very few trek to the Deccan today.

From the Deccani painting and decorative arts, both of which shed considerable light upon present-day investigations, emerges the picture of leisurely life-style; relaxed, easy-going and ultimately, like the Ottomans, sedentary. In assessing the civilizations of the Muslim Deccan, what is lacking is an adequate number of scholars, travellers, and researchers in this area.

Another characteristic of the Deccan was calligraphy. The evidence is particularly gratifying because calligraphy extended beyond paper to stone, of which the Deccan inherited an abundance.

However, given the impact architecture has on our lives and perceptions of the past as well, the ruins of the Deccan deserve a second chance for review. As to how design shapes colour and techniques of painting, interpretations of ideologies, and spirited reactions, the visual arts influence the way we look at ourselves, what art informs us of earlier tastes, there is a plethora of treasures within the Deccan and those created on this exciting sun-drenched plateau that deserve greater attention.

Qutb Shahi Painting: A Passion for Nature

The Qutb Shahs commissioned a number of paintings that are widely distributed all over the world in public and private collections, including those that Sir Akbar Hydari bequeathed to the Prince of Wales Museum in Bombay and the Saltykova-Shchedrina State Public Library in St Petersburg, Russia. The St Petersburg version is smaller and of later date according to Nabil Saidi of the Islamic Art Department of Sotheby's in London, an eminent expert in Islamic painting, to whom I am grateful for this information. Nabil Saidi catalogued for Sotheby's in London (*Sotheby's Oriental Manuscripts and Miniatures*, London, April 1990, Number 32), *The Wedding Procession of Sultan Abdullah Qutb Shah of Golconda, 1630* (gouache with gold on paper, 241 x 320 mm.). Abdullah Qutb Shah (1614-1672), the



12. Deccani Ivory Throne Leg. Golconda Market Trade? Deccan. Seventeenth century. Private Collection.
Photo: courtesy Sotheby's, New York City.



13. Hope Diamond. Reset nineteenth-twentieth century. The Smithsonian Institution, Washington DC.
Photo: courtesy The Smithsonian Institution.

seventh sovereign of Golconda, is portrayed riding a chestnut horse with his young bride. He ascended the throne while a lad of twelve years of age.

In the Sotheby's *Wedding Procession*, Abdullah was exactly sixteen. The painting depicts the tenderness between the newly-wed couple, characteristic of Golconda painting — the rendering of feeling rather than the formality warranted by royals on such occasions, as found in Mughal painting. Typically seen are the parasols, the retinue, but most pleasing of all the covered bullock-carts with prancing bulls, and to the upper right, Hindu temples. A further study is needed to understand the passion for flowers among the Golconda élite and also found here in the immediate foreground.

Golconda: Market of Textiles, Ivories, and Chinese Porcelain

The House of Qutb Shah enjoyed mercantile relations with dynastic China during the late Ming age, of Lung-ching to Ch'ung-chen (1567-1644), and early Ch'ing, of Shun-chih to K'ang-hsi (1644-1722). Deccani ports of Masulipatnam, as well as some possibly located from Srikakulam, Vishakapatnam, Kakinada to Pulicat Lake enabled this trade in textiles, porcelain, and ceramics to flourish. A large number of porcelain objects, including blue and white chargers, entered Hyderabad from the sixteenth century. Ivories entered the Golconda trade from neighbouring Orissa and elsewhere.

Diamonds

Jewels, excavated at the Kistna Valley in the neighbouring area of Golconda, emerged in the markets of the Qutb Shahis. An astounding number of diamonds, in particular, attracted an eager group of merchants of precious stones. Before long, the arterial route, called Karwan even today, linking the twin cities of Golconda and Hyderabad, had several thousand metres of property assigned for this jewel market, better known as the Diamond Market. Foreigners arrived in Golconda, lured by its fabled diamonds and as these precious stones changed hands so did stories — some factual, others far-fetched. Purportedly, the prized diamond of the Crown belonging to the House of Windsor of Great Britain, the Kohinoor, travelled on its tortuous and controversial journey to the West originally from the Golconda of the Qutb Shahs.

A Haven of Harmony

In Hyderabad, there are sites where the sacred precincts of a Hindu temple contain the remains of a Muslim priest. Hyderabad's Muslims are known to revere Hindu sites, including the most beloved in Andhra Pradesh, Tirupathi.

The roots of goodwill can be traced to an acquired heritage of open-mindedness, compassion, understanding, and love. Hyderabad as an earthly paradise has survived for four hundred years.

Demographic changes within the last three decades have exerted demands for housing, natural resources, and education. Concerned individuals feel the stress incurred by these new pressures and increasing levels of pollution. Conservationists, ecologists, naturalists, and lobbyists have taken up numerous causes of popular concern and brought them to the attention of both the state and the central government. Conscientious politicians, influential bureaucrats, and conservationists have implemented various plans for preserving the city's historic monuments.

NOTES

1. Surendranath Sen, ed., *Indian Travels of Thevenot and Careri*, New Delhi, The National Archives of India, 1949, p.131.
2. Jean Baptiste Tavernier, *Travels in India*, trans., V. Ball, London, 1925, vol. 2, p.138.

Hyderabad

Garden To A City

—S. P. Shorey

Travellers' Accounts of the Garden City

In the early seventeenth century, Hyderabad was just a vast garden. Buildings only existed as if to provide relief. With a population of only eighty thousand in 1600¹ Hyderabad, like most Indian cities of its time, could well be expected to have an abundance of open spaces and gardens. The glowing description of Hyderabad's gardens in travellers' accounts, however, gives the impression that Hyderabad was perhaps greener than the rest.

Thèvenot in 1665-1666 wrote:²

There are many fair gardens in this Town, their beauty consists in having long walks kept very clean and lovely fruit trees; but they are satisfied with several cisterns or basins with water.

Tavernier (1676)³ found gardens even on the roof of Hina Mahal...

...trees of that bigness that it is a thing of great wonder how these arches should bear so large a Burthen.

Hyderabad's gardens appear to have lasted for over a century. No Qutb Shahi structure — a mosque, a tomb, or a palace — was complete without a deep step-well. Many such wells, with beautiful arcades extending three floors below, act as a source of water to this day.

In 1750 a French officer of Bussy's army wrote:⁴

In all the houses, large or small, there are always a courtyard, a reservoir and a fountain...

All the rest of the surroundings is only a large garden where are two beautiful vines, rows of mango trees, date palms, cocoanuts, fig-trees, bananas, oranges, citrons, with some yew trees...and two large cisterns on the right and left, which water by means of channels all this large garden, the avenues and the topes.

Hyderabad, the Open City

Unlike most medieval cities of India, Hyderabad was founded in 1591 as an open city, a city without any walls. Muhammad Quli conceived Hyderabad as “a replica of paradise itself”.⁵ His paradise needed no protection. The walls had to be added later and this was completed in 1740 to defend the city from Maratha attack.

The special position of Qutb Shahi Hyderabad allowed unlimited space for its sprawling gardens, spreading from “Nabat Ghat” to “Bagh-e-Dilkusha”, then extending beyond the Koh-i-Tur palace in the south.

The Royal Centre: an Artist's Impression

Based on historical accounts, H. K. Sherwani reconstructed a “Layout of Principal Buildings of Hyderabad at the time of Muhammad Quli Qutb Shah.”⁶ This writer attempted an artist's impression based on Sherwani's layout with the addition of the third dimension. This is to be treated as purely imaginary and in no way purports to represent the actual appearance of buildings of that time. The focal point of the city was the Charminar (four minarets), built in 1592, which can be seen in the foreground (height: 56.7 metres, base: 30 metres square).

Tilted Grid

The drawing covers the northwestern quarter of the Charminar extending up to the Musi River. The axis of the Charminar and the roads passing through it, deviates about ten degrees from the cardinal directions. The Charminar has a mosque on its roof. It is likely that Qutb Shahi builders wanted to orient the mihrab of this mosque towards Mecca which is aligned north of west from Hyderabad (see the interpretation of Jan Pieper).⁷ In that case, it is difficult to explain why the Jami Masjid built around the same time (1598) and at the foot of the Charminar, was aligned differently. The Jami Masjid faces cardinal west.

Palace Complex

The Qutb Shahis built an elaborate royal palace complex consisting of residential quarters, offices, records, and ancillary buildings in the northwestern quarter. On the south, the quarter was defined by the road leading to Golconda over the Purana Pul, the oldest bridge built in 1578. This road is now known as Lad Bazar.

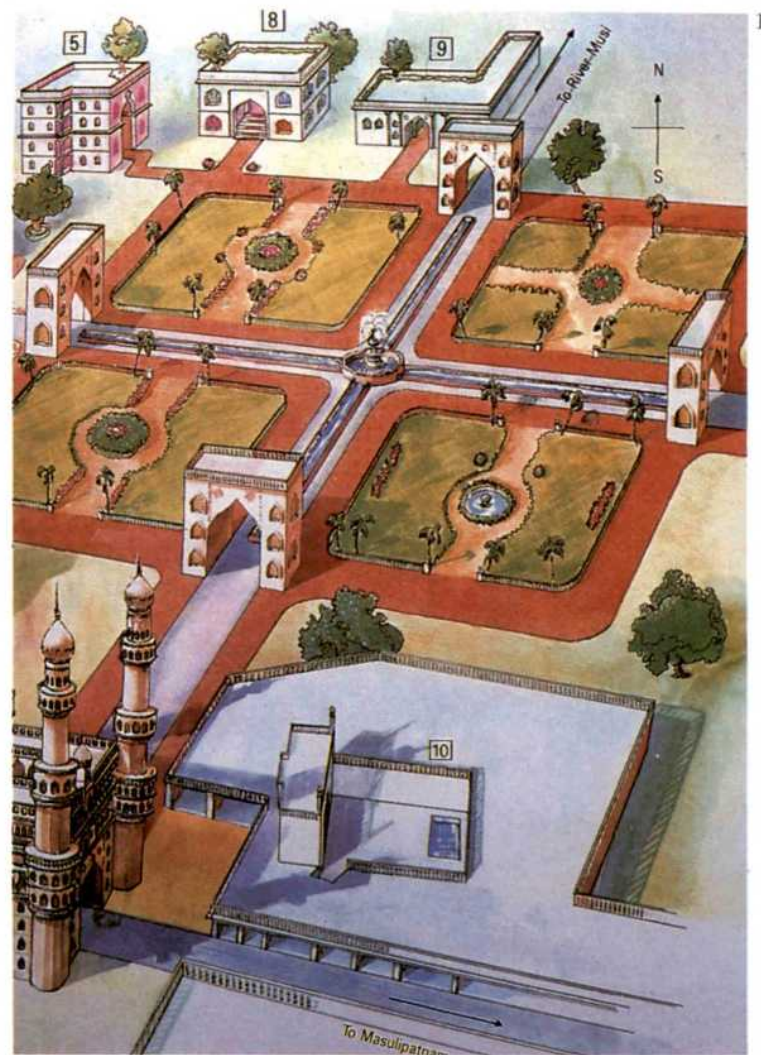
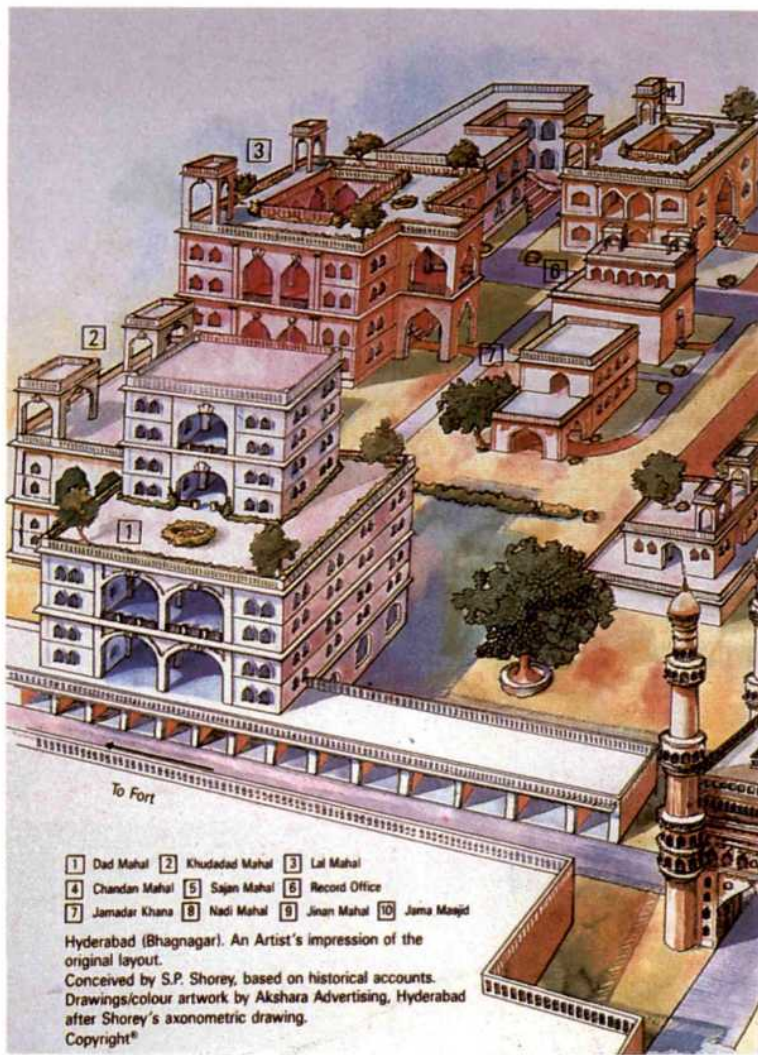
The principal approach to the palace complex was from the east, through an archway known as Kaman-e-Sehar-batil which is one of a group of four similar archways facing four different directions around a large central square. Each *kaman* or arch was 18.3 metres high, 11 metres wide, and 1.8 metres thick at the base.

Encroachment of the Central Square

The square starts at a distance of about seventy-six metres north of the Charminar. At its centre was a large fountain. Each side of the square originally the Jilukhana or Guards Square, measured about 230 metres in length. The square has unfortunately been “considerably defaced at the corners by the addition of shops”. Today a small fountain plays at the centre of four roads and the square has been fully built up. The western half of the square, among the three arches — Machili Kaman, Sehar-batil Kaman, and the Char Kaman, can be seen as free from any structures. Only a few shops appear on the eastern side. It is possible that the encroachment began in a small way some time around the 1750s. The square totally disappeared in about a hundred years and by 1845 all the corners were completely built over.

The Garden Square as the Nucleus of the City

Jan Pieper has given special meaning to this square as the key element in the founder's dream of creating Hyderabad as a “replica of paradise”. It is important to note that “the Sultan would not allow the huge piazza to be left without further decoration and ordered cocoanut and betel nut trees to be planted right round, which must have enhanced the

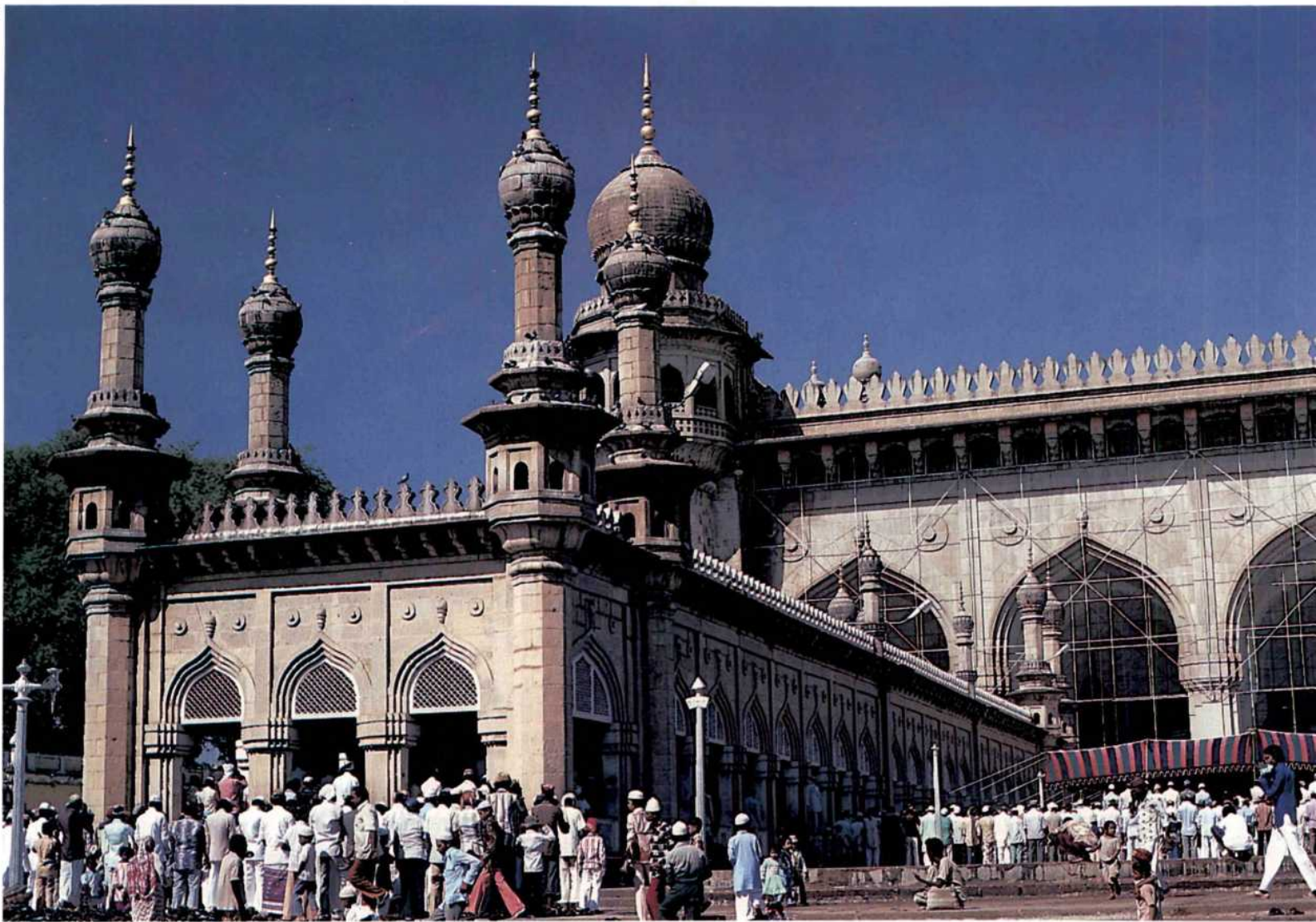


1. An Artist's Impression of Central Hyderabad during the Reign of Mohammad Quli.

Thévenot in 1665-1666 wrote:
"There are many fair gardens in this Town, their beauty consists in having long walks kept very clean and lovely fruit trees; but they are satisfied with several cisterns or basins with water."

The Jami Masjid is an instance of a congregational mosque worked on in the simple but imposing style that came to essentially characterize the architecture of Islamic centres of worship. Graced by typically sober lines, its gate is inscribed with a set of verses steeped in lyricism, the first of which runs as follows:

*"A ruler who is a King of Kings,
In whose reign virtue received due recognition,
In whose utterances the heart is comforted
And the life becomes refreshed.
He has rendered the Earth so beautiful,
Even heaven envies its beauty
And the 'garden of Iran' is put to shame.... "*



2. Jami Masjid. 1598. The first mosque after the Charminar Mosque. The Charminar is seen in the background. Note the difference in alignment.

beauty of the great square". One can thus visualize this square as a large landscaped garden, split in four symmetrical quarters with fruit-bearing trees — not much different from "Babur's double garden", depicted in contemporary miniatures⁸ if not the "Quranic Garden of Eden".

Multi-storeyed Palaces

The Qutb Shahis built with large blocks of granite. Thick walls, pointed ogee arches, onion-shaped domes, intricate stucco decorations, and tall minarets were characteristic architectural features. Many palaces were multi-storeyed. Muhammad Quli who was also a poet in his own right, wrote in a *ghazal*: "Muhammad has decorated the Khudabad Mahal. There are aspects of heaven in it. The palace is as high as the sky; the sun, the moon and the stars ornament it. Its eight storeys are like eight heavens in which the springs of nectar flow eternally."⁹ The Khudabad Mahal built in 1610 was apparently one of the tallest buildings. Nearby, Dad Mahal, the court of justice, was "nine storeyed high, facing the main thoroughfare" that is present-day Lad Bazar. Ruins of residential quarters and public buildings in Golconda Fort confirm the presence of many tall buildings in Qutb Shahi Hyderabad. This was, however, the prerogative of the king. Palaces and residences of other nobles and citizens were restricted to two storeys. Musq Mahal, one of the few Qutb Shahi palaces surviving today (unfortunately in a sad state of neglect), is only two storeys in height.

Hyderabad as Market Place — the Charminar-Lad Bazar Sector

Parts of Lad Bazar street are among the few surviving quarters of old Hyderabad. Lad Bazar begins at the Charminar and extends up to Mahboob Chowk, which is a market square with a mosque and a clock tower. The street is about 350 metres long with an average width of 9 metres. Over the centuries a unique market grew along Lad Bazar. Shops here sell bangles, attar, *surma* (kohl), *mehendi* (henna), *zari* (gold thread), laces, bridal clothes, and all that is needed for a Hyderabad marriage. The little shops on both sides of the street present a very colourful display, with the entire stretch wearing a permanently festive look, though the structures beneath could well be ancient and decaying. Some of the old shops have been virtually rebuilt with the ubiquitous rolling shutters added. In spite of that their charm remains and Lad Bazar today is no more merely a shopping street, but a tourist attraction as well.

Lad Bazar: the Qutb Shahi Period

The fifth Qutb Shahi king, Muhammad Quli, the founder of Hyderabad shifted his capital from Golconda to Hyderabad, the new site across the Musi River. He built the Charminar on the east-west road proceeding from Golconda to Machilipatnam Port. This road is, therefore, older than the city. Tavernier wrote in 1652:

After crossing the bridge [the present Purana Pul] you enter into a large street that leads you to the King's Palace.... At the end of this street there is a large piazza [present day chowk] on one side of which is a palace, in the middle where of there is a balcony wherein the king comes to sit when he pleases to give audience to the people....

This is an obvious reference to the Purana Pul road leading to Chowk Bazar and then to the Charminar. The palace mentioned is clearly the Dad Mahal, the King's court of justice.

Another historical source — *Tarikh-Muhammad Qutb Shah* — describes Lad Bazar as follows:

...When the main layout of the city was complete, the Sultan ordered the construction of 14,000 shops, schools, mosques, caravan serais, and baths to be built on both sides of the road...perhaps the oldest palace was the Dad Mahal or the palace of equity...this palace was constructed in such a way that one side of it overlooks the main thoroughfare, so that it would be easily accessible for those who wanted to lay a complaint before the royal person.¹⁰

By the early seventeenth century Lad Bazar was already established as a shopping street connecting the Chowk and the Charminar.

3



The city's first landmark, the Purana Pul—literally meaning old bridge—was the structure facilitating Hyderabad to expand southward. Fording the Musi River, this provided a secure refuge for the Qutb Shahis in times of distressing intrusions on their otherwise “open city”. The bridge, which went up in 1578, bears the legend “As safe from flood as a pearl in its oyster.”

4



3. Purana Pul. 1578.

4. Shahi Jilukhana Gate, Lad Bazar. 1748.

Lad Bazar in the Days of the Asaf Jahis

Early Asaf Jahi rule in the eighteenth century had some more French visitors, this time soldiers and not travellers. A French officer of Bussy's army wrote, in 1750:

We reach an old building exposed to the four winds which faces four roads. In the centre of it is a reservoir of free stone, above it are extremely high pyramids, which can be seen from very far outside the city [Charminar]. On the opposite side is a road full of shops, both on the left and right containing all kinds of merchandise, such as drugs of all sorts, every kind of spice, books, paper, paste, board, ink, pens, gingham, white cloth, silk fabrics and yarn of all sorts of colours, swords, and bows, arrows and quivers, knives and scissors, spoons and forks, thimbles and dice, niddles large and small, gems, fine and false; in short, all that one may desire. At the beginning and end of this road are a number of large shops of confectioners, bakers and fruit sellers. Next, we enter a circular place which is the Chauk Bazar. In the morning here are sold cattle, horses, camels, sheep, poultry and eggs.

The 1772 Map of Hyderabad City

In the Idara-Adabiat-i-Urdu institution at Hyderabad, there is an old map of the city bearing the date 1772. The map clearly shows the alignment of Lad Bazar from the Charminar to the Chowk, with a mosque and the market at the Chowk, and rows of shops on both sides of Lad Bazar. The map shows the Jilukhana with its gateway. Two arched openings on the southern side of Lad Bazar towards Mecca Masjid are also present. This further supports the historic authenticity of Lad Bazar as the oldest shopping street of Hyderabad. The name Lad Bazar may, however, be of a later origin.

Rebuilding of Lad Bazar in the Eighteenth Century

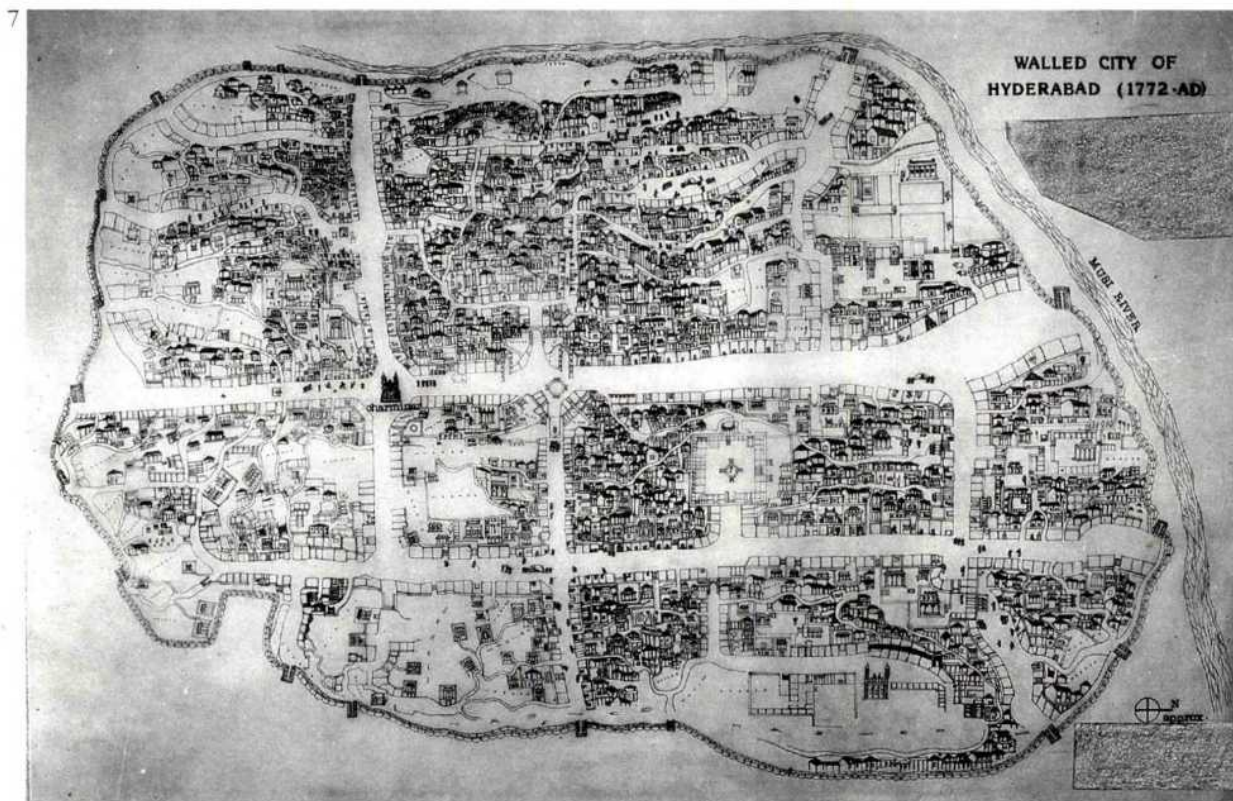
After the Mughal invasion of Golconda (1687) the Qutb Shahi palaces near the Charminar were destroyed. The shops and buildings that faced Lad Bazar during that period are most likely to have perished. The present-day structures of the shops in Lad Bazar and the Jilukhana gate, however, had already come into existence by 1772. It is possible that Lad Bazar shops were built again, during the early Asaf Jahi period, restoring it to its original glory.



5. Musq Mahal (Atlapur). 1673. One of the few Qutb Shahi palaces surviving today.



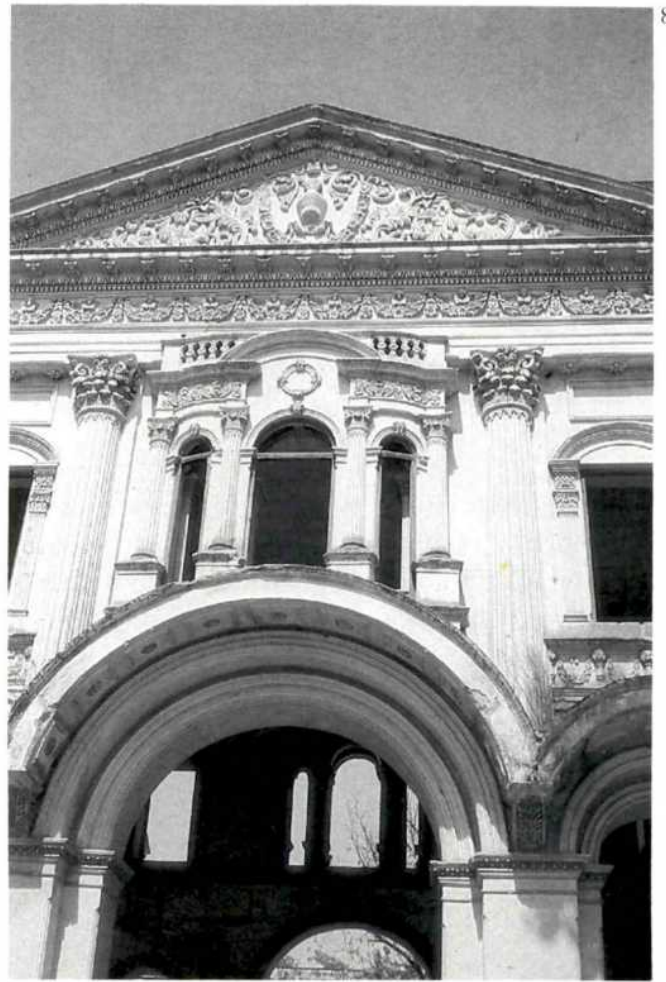
6. Lad Bazar.



7. Part of the Walled City in 1772.

Later Qutb Shahi

tradition continued to propagate Muhammad Quli's cherished ideal of creating Hyderabad as a "replica of paradise". Be they elaborate royal palace complexes with ancillary buildings, or offices and residential quarters, few structures were left unadorned by spacious gardens and huge plazas planted with coconut and betel-nut trees.



8. Osman Mansion. One of the buildings in the King Koh Palace complex, it is now demolished and only the façade is seen.

9. An Eighteenth-century Wooden Garden Pavilion in the Continuing Qutb Shahi Tradition.

Evidence of Architectural Control

Close observation of the old shops from the Charminar right up to the Purana Pul gate, reveals a uniformity of façade, with the late Mughal cusped arch carved in lime mortar and the extensive use of wooden frames in roofing, balconies, projections, and carved doors and windows. It is not known who implemented this scheme of standardized shop fronts. This, however, is an excellent example of architectural control of a street façade in late medieval India. The shops are accommodated in simple but beautifully proportioned cubicles in two storeys. There are variations in the spacing of arches. Narrow and steep staircases are thoughtfully tucked between two shops, with a secondary arch of a very narrow span over their opening. One such staircase serves more than one cubicle on the first floor. At present, the upper floors of some of the shops are used as residences and some as extensions of shops or workshops.

Purana Pul: Bridging the Centuries

The bridges of Hyderabad provide an interesting angle to examine the city's history. The Purana Pul built in 1578 was the first landmark that made it possible for the city to grow southward. It facilitated the creation of the new city of Hyderabad in the seventeenth century. The Qutb Shahis, however, continued to treat Golconda Fort as an integral part of their capital. It was a safe haven where they took shelter in case of any foreign attack on their "open city". The last Qutb Shahi, King Abul Hasan, was captured in 1687 by the Mughal emperor Aurangzeb from Golconda Fort and not from the "Qutb Mandir" palace near the Charminar.

Days of Neglect

After the fall of the Qutb Shahis till 1724, Hyderabad remained a city of a mere province of the Mughal empire with its headquarters at Aurangabad. In 1724 the Mughal governor assumed autonomy and founded the Asaf Jahi dynasty but continued to retain Aurangabad as his capital. By 1748 the royal Qutb Shahi buildings in the northwest quarter of the Charminar no more existed. The area was full of "dwellings of poor quality, narrow roads and crooked lanes". Construction of new palaces on the southwestern corner behind Mecca Masjid had begun. It was only Nizam Ali Khan (1763), who transferred his capital to Hyderabad. Thus the city was again declared the capital on June 7, 1770.

NOTES

1. Tertius Chandler and Gerald Fox, *3000 Years of Urban Growth*, London, Academic Press Inc., 1974, p. 251.
2. Thèvenot, *The Travels in the Levant*, A. Lovell, trans., London, H. C. Lark, St Paul Church-Yard, 1687.
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4. Sir Jadunath Sarkar, trans., "Hyderabad and Golconda in 1750 as seen through French Eyes," *Islamic Culture*, April 1936.
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FIGURE ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

All photos: S. P. Shorey.

Goleonda Picchwais

Expressions Of Devotion

—*Shehbaz H. Safrani*

Among all the noble deities of the Hindu pantheon, there is possibly none better loved than Lord Krishna. He brings smiles, even to children — toddlers in India enjoy nothing more than emulating this most joyous of gods. Given his blue appearance, he happens to be easily recognized.

Magnificent Qutb Shahi Embroidery and Rare Shri Nathji *Picchwais*

Undoubtedly, Lord Krishna is also among the most popular of Hindu divinities. The sweetness symbolic of his character that has attracted generations of the Hindu faithful, has also found numerous followers, including this writer.

Some scholars believe Lord Krishna¹ was both a historic figure as well as a mythic avatar of Lord Vishnu. Imbued with the very spirit of India, frequently found in agrarian milieux, and closely associated with cattle, Lord Krishna captured the Indian imagination. Over a long period of creativity spanning nearly a millennium across the subcontinent, there are unique Chola bronzes of Lord Krishna at the one end and an astonishing, continuing tradition of Mithila folk paintings of the Blue Lord at the other.

Somewhere between this aesthetic saga featuring Krishna, is an interpretation of the same beloved god as Shri Nathji. In the theological and artistic apotheosis of Krishna, taken literally from the context of the earth where he walked about as a cowherd, portrayed among commoners such as the majority of Indians out in the fields, Krishna enters the hearts of the people of India no differently than Christ. The acclaim is universal, the tradition established. Again, the common ground — divested of orthodoxy, liturgy and rituals — between Christ and Krishna is that both are synonymous with sweetness.

Like his immediate deified predecessors, Rama and Vishnu, Krishna has maintained a remarkable position in popular literature, music, and the visual arts of India. Some of the most idyllic images of Krishna were commissioned by enlightened patrons of the Punjab Hills in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries. The bucolic tone of the Pahari landscape, real and imagined, in Krishna paintings from Kangra and Basohli is unforgettable. Similarly, the embroidered coverlets from Chamba² to Kathi chakla of the Mochi School in Saurashtra³ are some of the numerous ways in which the most unsung villages of India have shown their devotion to the god.

Literary Evidence

Chandogya Upanishad

The *Upanishads*,⁴ philosophical treatises pertaining to ancient Hindu theology, embellishing the earlier *Vedas*⁵ or the oldest sacred writings of Hinduism, contain the first reference to Krishna.⁶

A “session” or *Upanishad*, meant sitting at the feet of a master who communicated esoteric doctrines. In all, Indic literature inherited one hundred and eight *Upanishads*.⁷ Of the earlier *Upanishads*, the *Chandogya*, dating back to c. sixth century BC, consists of discussions between sages and their disciples. These exchanges centred on the meaning of life itself and were focused in particular on the soul and its affinity to God.

The germination of one of the most persistent questions in Indian philosophy, reincarnation, evolved from the *Chandogya Upanishad*. Travelling through its transient journey called life, the soul continued beyond death. According to the *Chandogya Upanishad*, the realization of the self, or *moksha*, enabled the soul's release from this perpetual bondage of life-and-death cycles.

Interestingly enough, “Chandogya is the singer of the *saman*” (in Sanskrit: *Chando sama gayati iti chandogah*).⁸ Of the eight chapters constituting the *Chandogya Upanishad*, it is the first two that are equally critical for our greater understanding of the exceptionally rare seventeenth and eighteenth century Golconda and Hyderabad *picchwais* (wall-hangings behind a deity) executed to honour Lord Krishna as Shri Nathji and was conceived by a South Indian Brahmin, Vallabhacharya (1479-1531).

From a personal perspective what is significant is that Vallabhacharya was born in Kankarpatu, Andhra Pradesh.⁹

The first two chapters of the *Chandogya Upanishad* are based on the ubiquitous Indic form of learning, questions and answers. Liturgy, doctrine, the comprehension of the revered syllable *Aum*, and the varied nuances of *saman* take up these two chapters. Ten sections of chapter one deal with the syllable *Aum* meant to be sung loudly. The essence of the *saman* is the *udgithab*.

As with these marvellous Golconda and Hyderabad *picchwais*, so also the earlier indications in the *Chandogya Upanishad* signify the need for savouring *rasa*, literally the flavour (Sanskrit: *Sa esa rasanam rasatamah paramah paradhyo stamo yad udgithab*).

From philosophical and poetic nuances, never too simple to penetrate the subtleties of early Hindu thought, people begin to appreciate Indian theophanies. Divinity, it is clear, requires some form of manifestation for the faithful. Dichotomous as a varied number of images continue to confound some, Hinduism is a monotheistic faith. The wonder of it all lies in recognizing the ingenuity with which Hindu sages and talented artists created a staggering number of deities. Equally glorious is the humility of many creative individuals

Krishna embroidery took on a particularly exalted position in the form of textile art in the Deccan. Commonly recurring motifs included clusters of adoring gopis and the kadamba tree.



1. *Lord Krishna*. Golconda. Seventeenth century. Magnificent gold embroidery on red velvet; height: 1.85 metres, width: 1.52 metres. Navin Kumar Collection, New York City. Photo: Navin Kumar Collection, New York City.

who preferred to bask in the beauty of oblivion, all for the privilege of guiding others on the path towards God.

What Vallabhacharya achieved with the *picchwai* paintings of Shri Nathji in the *oeuvre* of post-Mughal visual arts is comparable within the Western context with St Francis of Assisi who inspired the early Renaissance painter Giotto, and St Ignatius of Loyola who inspired Rubens. Just as the actual personalities of St Francis and St Ignatius became aesthetically eclipsed in the greater glory of Christ the Lord in Western painting, so also did Vallabhacharya enhance the majesty of Shri Nathji in *picchwai* paintings in Golconda and Hyderabad, as well as in Nathadwara in Rajasthan.

The Mahabharata

Whereas the *Chandogya Upanishad* refers to Krishna as a disciple of Ghora of the Angirasa family,¹⁰ it is in the great Indic epic, *Mahabharata*, compiled between fourth century BC and fourth century AD that Krishna emerges. With more than a hundred thousand couplets, nearly eight times the length of Homer's *Iliad* and *Odyssey* combined, the great epic of the descendants of Prince Bharata dealt with a historical event: the rivalry between two families, the Kauravas and the Pandavas. The actual battle occurred over Kurukshetra, with its capital at Hastinapur, north-east of contemporary Delhi. The date assigned by most scholars is c. tenth century BC.

Episodes in the *Mahabharata*, written in narrative form, achieved renown for such tales as that of Nala and Damayanti, Savitri and Satyavan, and the discourse, the *Bhagavad Gita*. Vyasa, an eminent sage, is long considered to have "arranged" the existing material of the beloved *Gita*, which acquired its critically acclaimed form by AD 400. The quintessence of the *Gita* rests in a world depicting a continuing clash between good and evil.

"When disappointment stares me in the face and all alone I see not one ray of light, I go back to the *Bhagavadgita*," wrote Mohandas Karamchand Gandhi as a young barrister from South Africa in his journal, *Young India* (1925). "I find a verse here and a verse there and I immediately begin to smile in the midst of overwhelming tragedies — and my life has been full of external tragedies — and if they left no visible, no indelible scar on me, I owe it all to the teachings of the *Bhagavadgita*."

The good in the *Gita* emerged as the *devas* or gods. They were Vedic deities, for the most part, led by Indra, lord of the heavens; Agni (fire); Varuna (water); Surya (sun); and Kama (love). Readers and viewers should look at the upper section of all the Golconda-Hyderabad *picchwais* and the magnificent Navin Kumar Golconda embroidery, illustrated here. The same rule applies to many other examples of Nathadwara *picchwais*. Above the central scene, with its *axis mundi*, symbolic also of Lord Krishna, are the palanquins with Indra, the visaged sun, Surya. The moon is there but less conspicuous.

The *Gita* is also called an *Upanishad*, or a session. Given the fratricidal encounters between the Kauravas and the Pandavas in the *Gita*, one is reminded of the key principles of the *Upanishads*. A verse from the *Vaisnaviya Tantrasara* that received popular attention (Sanskrit: *Sarvopanisado gavo dogdha gopalanandanah partho vatsah sudhir bhokta dugdham gitamrtam mahai*), has its visual counterpart in *picchwai* painting. Translated it reads:

The *Upanishads* are cows and the cowherd's son, Krsna, is the milker; Arjuna is the calf, the wise man is the drinker and the nectar-like *Gita* is the excellent milk.¹¹

The *devas* presided in Indra's heaven and are clearly depicted in the Golconda-Hyderabad *picchwais*. Indra and his celestial deities were still below Vaikuntha, the heavenly abode of Vishnu, the preserver. Though the demons existed beneath, they rarely appear in *picchwai* paintings and do not here.

The *Gita* provided a solution to the transmigration of souls, depending upon the path of righteousness or *dharma* which entailed the good one achieved in one's life. A contrary course towards evil resulted in reduced circumstances, ultimately leading to the state of a demon.

Yoga

Being an invaluable guide pointing to human foibles, the *Gita* showed yet another way to tread the proper path. Yoga, or self-discipline, requiring meditation, asceticism, and penance, catalyzed *dharma*. The learned soon discovered that yoga had definite advantages to offer.

Some Eminent Sages

Given time, a host of Indian sages — such empirical intellectuals as Shankara (AD 788-820), Anandagiri (late thirteenth century), Sridhara (1400), and Madhusudhana (sixteenth century) came up with a solution. Indian metaphysics and its complex issues notwithstanding, what Shankara addressed was the concept that God and the soul were synonymous, “one” to use his precise word.

The *Upanishad* phrase, one of the most succinct, “that thou art”, (Sanskrit: *tat tvam asi*), implied “God is my self”.¹² Ramanuja (eleventh century), another brilliant sage, expounded the ideal that the world and the body of God were analogous to body and soul. Knowledge for serving God demanded heart and soul, and it was this knowledge that revealed God within one’s soul.

Bhakti

The closest link between grasping the concept of God and any literary tradition comes from *bhakti* or devotion. Yet another original idea of medieval India, *bhakti* postulates an expression of feelings whereby the love of God transcends love for other humans.

Ramanuja expounded the notion of *bhakti* as total devotion to Lord Vishnu the preserver. God, as perceived by him was a personal one, a god whose grace and love extended for His creation.¹³

While he may not have excelled Shankara in metaphysics, Ramanuja’s ideas took root and inspired other devotional sects in successive generations. Madhava (1199-1276), another brilliant South Indian thinker, provided further impetus to Ramanuja’s thought, emphasizing that devotion was the main precept of the *Gita*.

The key to Madhava’s philosophy is dualistic or *dvaita*. The soul cannot be identified with the Supreme, in one sense and yet be different from Him in another. Further the earlier writings of Nimbarka (c. 1162) also stressed devotion to the Supreme.

According to Nimbarka all three, the soul (*jiva*), the world (*jagat*), and God are very different from one another. All the same, the soul and the world ultimately depend upon the will of God. And so, the need for devotion. Lord Krishna says,

Have your mind in Me, be devoted to Me. To Me shall you come. What is true I promise. Dear are you to Me. They who make Me their supreme object, they to Me are dear. Though I am unborn, the changeless Self, I condition my nature and am born by my power. To save the good and destroy evil-doers, to establish the right, I am born from age to age. He who knows this when he comes to die is not reborn but comes to Me.¹⁴

Vallabhacharya, to whom we owe the renaissance of Vaishnavite paintings of Shri Nathji, developed the philosophy of pure non-dualism or *suddhadvaita*. Only through devotion to God, could there be a release from cyclical life and death. “Bhakti is truth associated with love” (Sanskrit: *premalaksana sraddha. Amrtatarangini*).¹⁵

Lord Krishna

Krishna, literally meaning “black” or “dark as a cloud”, is the eighth incarnation or avatar of Lord Vishnu. The demon Kamsa usurped the throne of Mathura, south of modern Delhi. Lord Vishnu was born in the Vrishni sect of the Yadava tribe as Krishna, son of Vasudeva and Devaki, Kamsa’s sister.

Told of a prophecy that Devaki’s child would crush her, Kamsa tried destroying her progeny. Accompanied by his elder brother Balarama, Krishna was smuggled to Gokula, a village where both boys were nurtured. Gokula literally means a “multitude of cattle”.

The head of the cowherds, Nanda, and his wife Yashoda raised the children in Gokula. While still a child, Krishna revealed powers for performing miracles and slaying demons. Since his cowherd days, Krishna enjoyed the sensuous world, soon becoming renowned as a lover, with milkmaids including his sweetheart, Radha, following the sound of his flute.

Finally, Krishna and Balarama returned to Mathura, ostensibly for slaying the devilish Kamsa. Noting the realm exposed to dangers, Krishna trekked at the head of the Yadava clansmen to the west coast of Kathiawar (in contemporary Gujarat) and established his court at Dwarka.

Hailed as the Great Saviour, Krishna's bonds grew stronger with the benign Pandava brothers, protagonists of the epic *Mahabharata*. When war between the two factions of the Pandavas and Kauravas ensued, Krishna advised them. And it was he who gave moral support to Arjuna, depressed and despondent prior to the battle of Kurukshetra. The narrative between Krishna and Arjuna, articulated brilliantly in the *Bhagavad Gita*, pointed to the need for devotion to a personal god.

In the end, while at Dwarka, the Yadava chiefs began to battle, in which period Krishna's brother and son were killed. Introspective and pondering over the tragic developments, Krishna rested in the forest. Thinking he was a deer from a distance, a hunter struck and killed him.

As the pastoral god, Krishna the cowherd overwhelmed Vedic faith. His cult aspired to repress sensual love. Its metaphysical ideals recognized Krishna with the All-God, Vishnu-Narayana, so he is considered an avatar. In the devotional *bhakti* tradition, Mira Bai, Chaitanya, and above all Vallabhacharya carried the legacy of Lord Krishna further among the people of India.

The sovereigns of the House of Qutb Shah of Golconda and Hyderabad were tolerant, open-minded, and enlightened. That these marvellous *picchwais* and a fabled embroidered *picchwai* were completed here, at Golconda and Hyderabad, makes the four hundredth anniversary of the city's founding all the more commemorative. Vallabhacharya's father Lakshmana Bhatta and mother Illamargaru left Andhra in 1479, trekking to the holy city of Varanasi (Benaras).¹⁶

Yearning for his ancestral roots in Kankarpatu, Andhra, Lakshmana Bhatta who was a brahmin, began journeying back south from Varanasi, having spent many years at that holy city. Propitiously, it would seem, he died at Tirupati, conceivably the most sacred Hindu site in entire Andhra. Vallabhacharya's widowed mother, Illamargaru, preferred spending her twilight years with her brother who had long officiated as a prelate for the Raya dynasty (1370-1565) of Vijayanagar.¹⁷

The Magnificent Lord Krishna Embroidery of the Qutb Shahi Period

Indians understand nature. The Navin Kumar Collection in New York City¹⁸ has one of the rarest and earliest Qutb Shahi embroideries of the seventeenth century, featuring Lord Krishna.

It is embroidered in gold and silk, and executed on red velvet, with vertical and horizontal bands of blue and green velvet framing the most sublime grove. The effect is overpowering, with virtually every creature shown — women, men, and cattle, even the peacocks perching atop the main tree (*axis mundi*) — anticipating a shower of rain. As anyone familiar with the Indian countryside learns, there is a discernible rise in temperature, then, invariably the rain descends. The weavers captured that sense of anticipation, as well as the awe marking the approach to the *kadamba* tree.

The *kadamba* tree — *ipomoea aquatica* — is acknowledged as the closest arboreal symbol of Lord Krishna. Particularly relevant from a specialist's perspective are the two squirrels, one on either side of the graceful *kadamba* tree trunk, racing up it mischievously.

In the Imperial Mughal painting *The Foppish Dervish Rebuked* of 1595 by Basawan, we find two squirrels scrambling up a tree. But this is an embroidery; we have nothing from



2. Picchwai for a Temple or Shrine. Hyderabad. C. 1750-1790. Paint on cotton; height: 2.4 metres, width: 2.6 metres. Boston Museum of Fine Arts, Boston. Gift of John Goelet. 67.837.

the sixteenth century comparable in calibre with the Golconda embroidery of Krishna. The scene is probably of the rainy season.

The mango trees flanking the *kadamba* are full of fruit, the mangoes dangling above the six gopis, three on each side. The pair in the centre holds *morchals* (peacock feather fans), the two behind them carry *chauris* (ceremonial whisks).

The superb delicacy of this Golconda embroidery is without parallel. The *zari* (gold and silver) embroidery has to be studied minutely for one to appreciate the high artistic standards of the seventeenth-century Deccani artisans.

With its six cows feeding six calves and two cowherds at opposite sides, there are twenty-one fish in red and blue, with five tortoises among them in the river below. Bright lotus blossoms bob out of the River Jumna. The visaged sun and the crescent moon, high above the *kadamba* tree are put in perspective with two peacocks swooping down symmetrically. The floral scroll pattern surrounding the tranquil scene, virtually every stitch of the embroidered attire of the women, contributes to this dazzling specimen of textile. From the devotional *bhakti* view, all the accoutrements, the peacock fans, whisks, garlands, even the adoring *gopis*, are worshipping the *kadamba* tree which is but symbolic of Lord Krishna. Though red and blue backgrounds have been acknowledged as being distinctly Deccani for *picchwais*, the use of red velvet is fascinating.

For centuries Golconda, Hyderabad, and Aurangabad held an esteemed position for woven silks and cottons using gold and silver threads, in *himru* and *mushru*. The Krishna embroidery discussed takes an exalted position in this form of textile art of the Deccan. It is entirely possible, given the refinement and charming ambience achieved by this gold embroidery, that is the work of artisans who were extremely proud of their *métier*.

Rare Golconda and Hyderabad Painted *Picchwais*

“Art is not a handicraft, it is the transmission of feeling the artist has experienced,” declared Count Leo Tolstoy. Given the theological and philosophical premises of Krishna, the evolution of *picchwai* paintings of Shri Nathji in the Qutb Shahi Golconda kingdom has its origins literally from the Krishna River delta. According to Colonel Raj K. Tandon, an eminent Hyderabad humanist, the Shri Nathji School “flourished in the region on the Golconda seaboard”.¹⁹

The Krishna River²⁰ delta yielded the finest quality of the *chay* root, growing wild in this river’s sandy islands. The *chay* produced the superior dyes necessary for the cottons on which the Golconda Shri Nathji *picchwais* were executed. In the case of Golconda and Hyderabad, the backgrounds were black and blue with the figures of Shri Nathji, the *gopis*, trees, and numerous details painted in gold for the most part. As mentioned earlier, the red background like that in the Golconda *picchwai* at the Museum of Fine Arts, Boston²¹ from the late 1700s, is simply blinding. But there is no other red *picchwai* or painting with such a fantastic boldness of monochrome red. Again, the scale of the Boston *picchwai* is staggering — 2.4 x 2.6 metres. For Shri Nathji devotees and admirers of Indian painting, such outstanding examples conceived in an entirely Asian mode of aesthetics, can perhaps be compared with the Venetian paintings of Titian.

The Christensen Fund Collection at the Art Gallery of Western Australia in Perth has one of the three rarest known Golconda *picchwais*. *Dana Lila: Taking the Toll, and other Rasa Scenes*, of the late seventeenth century, is among the most moving of paintings. An exquisite *picchwai*, it evocatively brings one close to the bucolic scenario where Krishna and his colleagues surprise the *gopis*. The toll (*dana*) demanded of these women consisted of a hug or a kiss, besides of course, some milk. Feigning to resist Krishna, the *gopis*, according to R. K. Tandon, “were actually delighted to submit to Krishna”.²²

Though anonymous artisans painted this *picchwai*, they were apprenticed to Mughal artists. In fact, contact between Mughal emperors and heads of the Pushti Marga²³ was initiated by none other than Akbar the Great (1542-1605). “How can one meet Sahib (God)?” Akbar asked his favourite courtier Birbal. Never at a loss for words and

renowned for his repartee, for once, Birbal was dumbfounded. Birbal's daughter resolved this dilemma by suggesting an imperial encounter with her guru, none other than the son of Vallabhacharya, Vitthalnathji, celebrated as Gosainji.

Akbar travelled to Gokula, where Birbal brought Vitthalji. The emperor and the spiritual leader conferred in privacy. "Tell me how one can meet Sahib," Akbar reiterated. "In the same way as you have met me today," said the sage. That required an explanation also, which Vitthalji provided:

Had I made a thousand attempts to meet Your Majesty, none of them might have succeeded. But when you, Sire, thought of meeting me, it became possible instantly.

It is the same with a human soul wishing to reach the Almighty. Such a meeting can only become possible if divine grace is extended to him.²⁴

The Christensen Fund Golconda *picchwai* has some of the most colourful birds, including parrots and peacocks, depicted in a row of splendid trees like the cypress. Though this excellent *picchwai* is completely Indianized, the cypress trees here appear as a kind of arboreal adieu to Persian and Turkish idioms. The self-confidence of Golconda painters, no matter where they trained and what they acquired in the process of their exposure to Mughal ateliers, their statement as an effort to express their feelings for Krishna is brilliant. The Christensen Fund *picchwai* is also a pictorial narrative of great intelligence. Where else but in the highly imaginative art of India does one discover a rainfall of some of the most fragrant flowers, *chambayli*, *champa*, *motia*, cascading from the sky silently upon Krishna and the *gopis* as in this magnificent *picchwai*.

In the horticultural world, these flowers, stark white with the most delicate of petals, belong to the jasmine family and have long been favourite with women across the social spectrum of India. For the well-attired *gopis*, including the reticent one with her hand outstretched, determined to stop Krishna's advances, the fragrance from this monsoon of jasmines must have been wonderful.

The right foreground finds Krishna dancing with Radha in another picturesque setting that has all the elements of a lush Indian landscape. The humanism with which these Golconda painters portrayed the cows sitting and standing is equally telling. This moving spirit within a great work of art could come only from two sources, Krishna and Vallabhacharya.

Leisure, capturing the mystical, dream-like ambience, with a persistent but cautious use of gold and limited modelling, characterized the paintings of the Deccan. Stemming from Persian and Vijayanagar (such as Lepakshi murals) sources, Deccani painting achieved a distinguished pictorial record. What we can discern in the Christensen Fund *picchwai* is that in some instances such as this exuberant celebration of Krishna, it exceeded "even some of the finest works from contemporary Mughal ateliers".²⁵

The cut-out section in the middle was meant for the Shri Nathji sculpture because *picchwais* were hung behind altars. Tandon is possibly correct in assuming that the Christensen Fund *picchwai* was completed in a Golconda royal atelier. Muhammad Quli was raised in Vijayanagar of the Raya dynasty. He was at ease with his Hindu subjects and his tolerant legacy was more or less diligently maintained by his successors, until the fall of the Golconda kingdom in 1687.

A *Picchwai* with a Glorious Sky

Devotees Worshipping Tree, 1600, measuring 2.3 x 2.1 metres from the Navin Kumar Collection in New York City has a sky rarely found in Shri Nathji *picchwais*. With the exception of a slight tear, it is in near mint condition. It is entirely possible that as Emperor Akbar had commissioned "special paintings of Shri Nathji",²⁶ perhaps a sovereign of Golconda extended his royal patronage to this extraordinary painting inspired by Krishna.

Muhammad Quli was alive at the time this *picchwai* was completed. It may also have been a royal gift to a loyal officer of the benign king. After all, such a practice did prevail at the Mughal court. For example, the sultanate painter Honahar executed a portrait of

Vallabhacharya for Sikandar Lodhi. The painting remained with the later Mughals. Emperor Shah Jahan presented it to Raja Roop Singh of Kishangarh in 1655 in appreciation for having captured Kabul "on the emperor's behalf".²⁷ Fortunately, it is the closest one can get to seeing the likeness of Vallabhacharya.

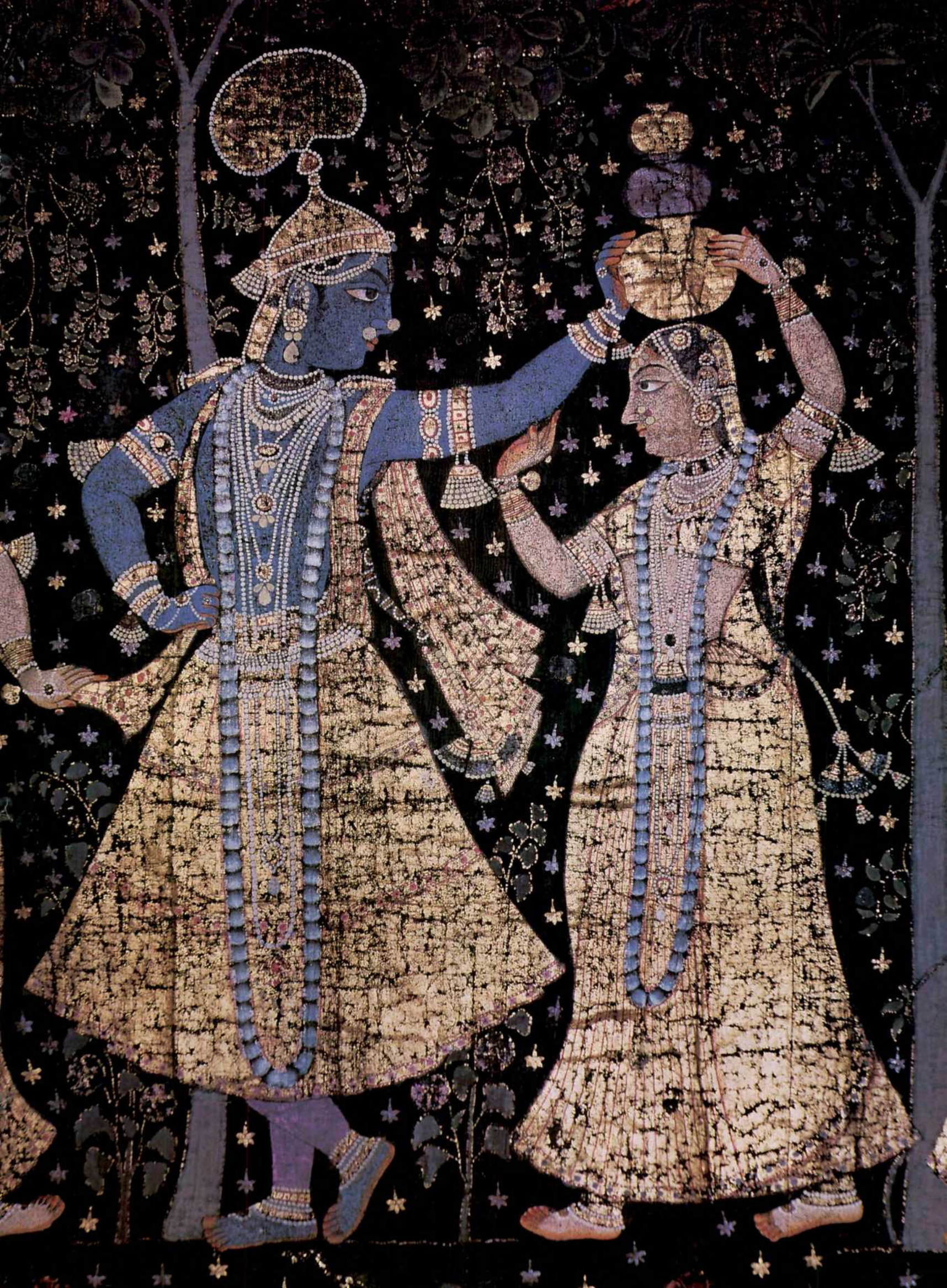
Another remarkable feature of the Navin Kumar *picchwai* is its richness of colouring which fairly sparkles, further emphasizing the assumption that it had been well preserved. Like the other Krishna embroidery in the same distinguished collection, this has also not been tested for a date based on chemical analysis. Stylistically, it belongs to the earlier phase of *picchwai* painting in Golconda.

With its pinks and blues portrayed with a distinct mastery of painting on cotton, the glorious sky takes on a cosmic quality. The moon to the extreme upper left; the sun to the opposite right; the chariots of the gods Indra, Brahma, Vishnu, and Shiva, are flying effortlessly. Above the unforgettable sky with its startling light and surrounding the entire *picchwai* is a border of blue and pink flowers. These colours and the floral motifs enhance the entire *picchwai*. And in the sacred waters of the Jumna, shown below are eight sarus cranes, since Lord Krishna was known as the eighth avatar of Lord Vishnu, the preserver. Similarly, the Golconda painters included eight swans, symbolic of knowledge, as well as



3. Dana Lila: *Taking the Toll and other Rasa Scenes*. Golconda. Late seventeenth century. Height: 2.9 metres, width: 3.8 metres. The Christensen Fund Collection, The Art Gallery of Western Australia, Perth. Photo: courtesy The Christensen Fund, Palo Alto, California.

4. Detail of figure 3.







5 *Devotees Worshipping Tree*. Deccan. 1600. Height: 2.3 metres, width: 2.1 metres. Navin Kumar Collection, New York City. Photo: courtesy Navin Kumar Collection, New York City.

serving as the *vahana* (vehicle) for Brahma, the creator.²⁸ The infinite sanctity of the cow should, in the Pushti Marga ideal, be perceived as providing the sweetened milk as a metaphor for the *Bhagavad Gita*.

How can one not love these docile, gentlest among the Lord's creatures. The cows sport the patrician gold favoured at Golconda, their smallish horns in red. The effect is overpowering. In the Sistine Chapel's *Creation* fresco panel, Michelangelo portrayed the Creator. From an aesthetic approach, at least some Christians may be tempted to accept that glorious version of Michelangelo. What we have in these Golconda *picchwais* are attempts by India's unknown but not entirely unsung painters revealing their love for God. What is a consistent theme among devotees and followers of Shri Nathji is turning to these embroideries and paintings to visualize Providence.

Change is reflected in schools of painting as well. In Hyderabad of the eighteenth century, tolerance towards all continued to be practised and groups of followers of Vallabhacharya established their presence in the city. A striking example of a painted and gilt-decorated cotton *picchwai* of the Deccan in the eighteenth century measuring 2.5 x 1.89 metres, differs from earlier Golconda *picchwais* in its use of increased gold. The egrets flying above, the eels and wading birds in the Jumna below are part of the change manifesting itself in Deccani *picchwais*. The high blouses of the four *gopis* reflect earlier Vijayanagar and Deccani ideals of feminine attire, but their saris are fuller. The central pair of *gopis*, facing each other, retains a residual Deccani demeanour with their slightly Chinese features, whereas the *gopis* at the opposite ends have Indian profiles. The shower of fragrant flowers is designed meticulously rather than the free-falling earlier florals in the Navin Kumar Collection and the Christensen Fund Collection *picchwais*.

While this eighteenth-century *picchwai*²⁹ is a fine example of a Shri Nathji painting, as the kingdoms of Berar, Bijapur, Bidar, Ahmednagar, and neighbouring Golconda had all disintegrated, it also reveals a paler palette. This is most noticeable in the grey colouring of the Jumna water and the sky. The propensity for gold colouring increased with the passage of time in Hyderabad *picchwais*.

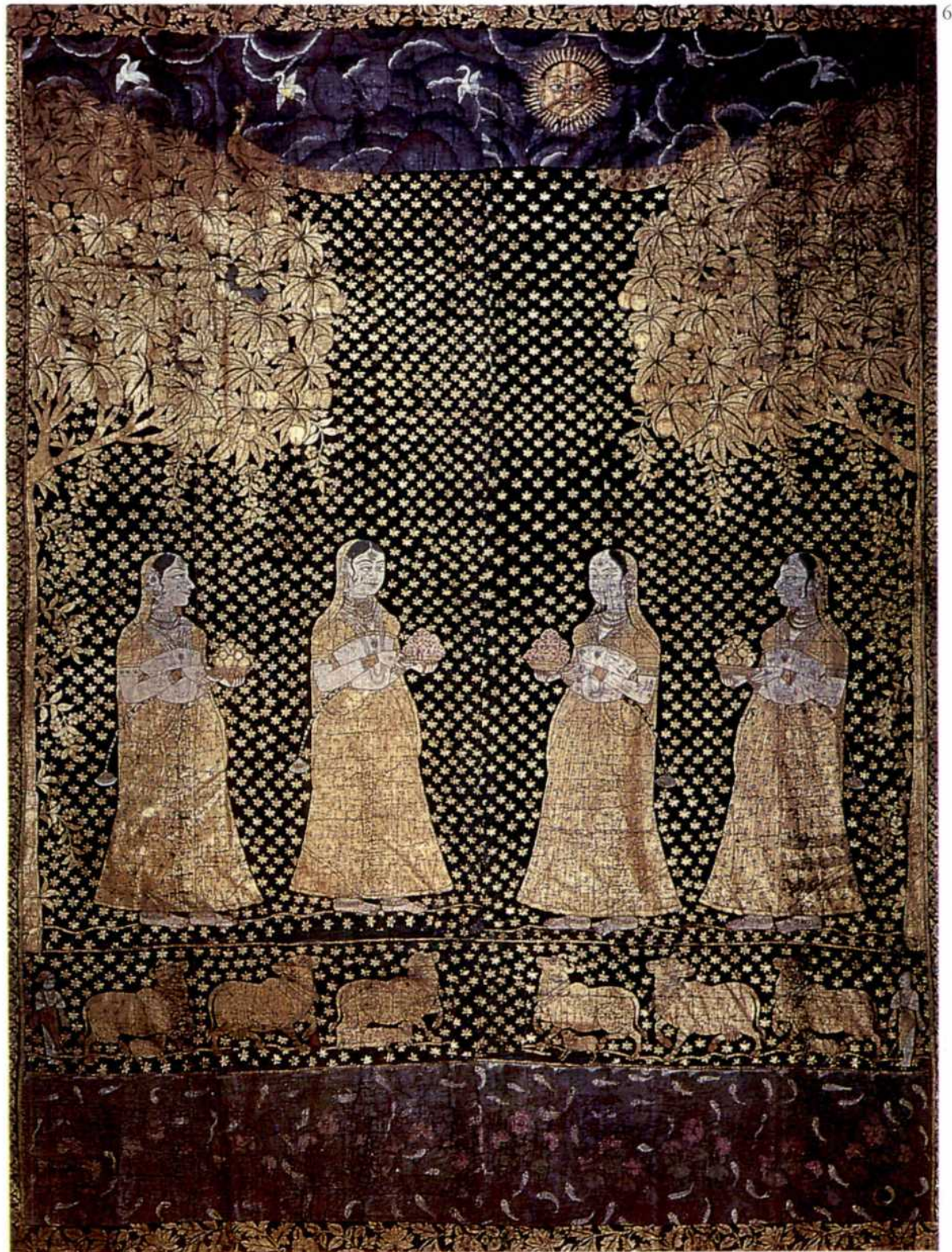
Of the celebrated faithful who established new roots in Hyderabad were such families as the Pitti,³⁰ Dasji, Govindas-Mokundas, and Bhagwandas. They have lived in Hyderabad for nearly two centuries, if not more.

The Honourable Raja Badrivishal Pitti, scion of the Marvari clans in Hyderabad, scrupulously maintains the traditions and the Pitti private temple, Ranganath,³¹ located at Nanakram Guda, about four kilometres west of Golconda Fort which contains not only deities but stucco work of the highest quality. A dynamic entrepreneur, he collects art and retains the Vallabhacharya tradition of devotion to Shri Nathji.

Shri Vitthal Dasji and Babu, one of his sons, are Hyderabad's pre-eminent jewellers.³² In their place of business and in their homes are numerous paintings and *picchwais* of Shri Nathji.³³ For generations, predecessors of Shri Vitthal Dasji, have maintained their presence within less than a kilometre of the Charminar, the heart of the city of Hyderabad. *En route* from the Charminar to Golconda, is one of the oldest temples consecrated to Shri Nathji, visited daily by Shri Vitthal Dasji.

NOTES

1. Pratapaditya Pal, *Krishna: The Cowherd King*, Los Angeles, Los Angeles County Museum of Art, 1972, p. 8.
2. Jasleen Dhamija, ed., *Crafts of Gujarat*, New York, Mapin, 1985, pp. 1-41, figs. 20 and 21.
3. Dhamija, *Crafts of Gujarat*.
4. Sanskrit: "Upa", near; "ni", down; "sad", to sit; a sitting down near; secret session.
5. Sanskrit: "knowledge"; "I have seen, I know".
6. S. Radhakrishnan, *The Bhagavadgita*, London, George Allen and Unwin, Ltd., 1967, p. 29.
7. A. L. Basham, *The Wonder that was India*, New York, Grove Press, Inc., 1959, p. 250.
8. S. Radhakrishnan, *The Principal Upanishads*, New York, Humanities Press, 1968, p. 336 ff.
9. Amit Ambalal, *Krishna as Shrinathji: Rajasthani Paintings From Nathdvvara*, New York, Mapin, 1987, p. 42.
10. W. G. Archer, *The Loves of Krishna: In Indian Painting and Poetry*, New York, Grove Press, Inc., 1967, p. 17.
11. Radhakrishnan, *The Bhagavadgita*, p. 13.
12. Radhakrishnan, *The Bhagavadgita*, p. 19.



6. *Painted and Gilt-decorated Cotton Picchwai*. Hyderabad, Deccan. Eighteenth century. Height: 2.5 metres, width: 1.89 metres. Sotheby's, New York City. Photo: courtesy Sotheby's, New York City.

13. His Divine Grace A. C. Bhaktivedanta Swami Prabhupada, *Srimad Bhagavata*, Los Angeles, Bhaktivedanta Book Trust, 1975, pp. 29-30.
14. Archer, *The Loves of Krishna*, p. 24.
15. Radhakrishnan, p. 20.
16. Ambalal, *Krishna as Shrinathji*, p. 42.
17. Ambalal, *Krishna as Shrinathji*, p. 42.
18. I am indebted to Navin Kumar for directing me to some of the rarities of Deccani art and graciously consenting to my writing about an aspect of his collection—the Deccan.
19. Colonel Raj K. Tandon, *The Spirit of India: A Survey of Indian Art*, Perth, Art Gallery of Western Australia, 1982, p. 94.
20. The Krishna (Kistna) River has its source near Mahabaleshwar in Maharashtra (in the North Satara district, south-east of Bombay) in the Western Ghats about fifty-three kilometres from the Arabian Sea. The Krishna flows across the entire peninsula from west to east for a distance of approximately one thousand and sixty-six kilometres before discharging into the Bay of Bengal. Its source is held sacred and is frequented by faithful pilgrims. In its eastward course, the Krishna flows through the heart of Andhra Pradesh before turning south-eastward between the Guntur and Krishna districts. The Krishna, unlike the rivers of northern India (replenished also by the melting snows of the Himalayan ranges), derives its water only from the monsoon rains. The main tributary of the Krishna is the Tungabhadra. The towns of Ellore, Masulipatnam, Nizamapatnam, and Comamur, all linked by canals today, are rather strong contenders for dyed textiles, with the deep indigo-blue-black of the Deccani *picchwais*. These and coastal sites such as Chirala, may provide further clues to what Tandon refers to as the "Golconda seaboard".
21. Stuart Cary Welch, *India: Art and Culture 1300-1900*, New York, the Metropolitan Museum of Art, 1985, p. 238, pl. 223. Also, two full pages preceding the title page, both illustrated in colour showing a detail of the red background eighteenth-century Hyderabad *picchwai*.
22. Tandon, *The Spirit of India*, pp. 84-85, 94-95. See cover also, for detail.
23. *Pushti Marga* or the path of grace is a term connotating the sect founded by Shri Vallabhacharya (1479-1531), who was born in Andhra and was of brahmin descent. Gradually espousing Vaishnavite ideals, he is revered as the pioneering spirit of Shri Nathji.
24. Ambalal, *Krishna as Shrinathji*, p. 46.
25. Tandon, *The Spirit of India*, p. 94.
26. Ambalal, *Krishna as Shrinathji*, p. 46.
27. Ambalal, *Krishna as Shrinathji*, p. 60.
28. Alain Danielou, *Hindu Polytheism*, Bollingen Series LXXIII, New York, Pantheon Books, 1964, p. 237.
29. Sotheby's, *Indian, Himalayan and Southeast Asian Art*, New York, (Sale 5823) March, 1989, illustrated no. 198. Carlton C. Rochell, Jr., Head of the Indian Art Department, Sotheby's in New York, kindly provided me with this colour plate. Wiebke Moore, Vice-President of Sotheby's in New York, provided access to catalogues, research material, and constantly alerted me about references to Deccani material.
30. "Badri Bhai", The Honourable Raja Badrivishal Pitti of Hyderabad, whose family and mine have been close for three generations, enabled me to see and study part of his formidable art collection. He has included me in significant discussions at his palace, Moti Bhavan.
31. I was honoured to attend the privileged viewing of the *garbha griha*, drink the sweetest water from the Ranganath temple well, and eat food prepared by Pitti temple priests, all on a full moon night. Later, I heard Pitti recordings of the flautist Hariprasad Chaurasia.
32. According to Shri Vitthal Dasji, doyen of contemporary Hyderabad jewellers, his family have been residents in Hyderabad since the days when the Nizams founded their dynasty, the House of Asaf Jah (1724-1948).
33. Having discerned my profound love for Shri Nathji for some decades, Shri Vitthal Dasji and his son Babu graciously permitted me to view their sacred shrines and private liturgical areas. Also, Raja Govindas-Mokundas showed me his private collection of Shri Nathji paintings for which I am most grateful. Similarly, Raja Bhagwandas and his family shared part of their collection of Shri Nathji paintings, enlightening me in numerous ways.

Bidri Ware Lyric Patterns

—Stephen A. Markel

In this province [Bidar] the excellent and valuable bidri pots are manufactured...different sorts of flowers are inlaid on them with gold and silver by the artisans of this place so delicately and nicely that even a painter could not picture them in his imagination.

(*Chahar Gulshan*, c. 1720-1759)¹

Bidri ware is an inlaid metal alloy unique to India, of which there are at present nine examples in the collection of the Los Angeles County Museum of Art. According to Indian oral tradition, the technical process used to manufacture the metalwork originated in Iran² and was introduced into Ajmer, Rajasthan in the early thirteenth century by the craftsmen who followed the great Muslim saint Khwaja Mu'inuddin Chishti (1141-1236), when he migrated there.³

Knowledge of the craft subsequently travelled to Bijapur in Karnataka in the early fifteenth century via a *bidri* worker named Abdulla ibn-Kaisar. *Bidri* ware production then moved to Bidar (whence the name of the metalware) during the reign of Ala'uddin Ahmad Bahmani II (1436-1458), who enticed Bijapuri *bidri* artisans to move to his kingdom near Hyderabad in return for full royal patronage.⁴

The manufacture of *bidri* ware flourished at Bidar and Hyderabad from the late sixteenth through the nineteenth centuries, with surviving works indicating an artistic zenith in the latter half of the seventeenth century. Although not produced by Mughal craftsmen, it was made to be exported to the Mughal court, as a number of seventeenth-century examples

survive which are embellished with Mughal-style floral motifs.

By the late eighteenth century the distinctive metalware was also being produced at other Muslim courts in northern India, principally at Purnea in Bihar and Murshidabad in Bengal, as well as at Lucknow in Uttar Pradesh during the nineteenth century. *Bidri* ware continues to be made to this day in Hyderabad and Bidar, although the works produced for today's tourist market by no means compare with the artistic masterpieces of olden times.

The Technique of *Bidri* Ware

The technical process used to produce *bidri* ware is complex. It involves three different metalworking specialists and five laborious manufacturing stages: casting, designing, engraving, inlaying, blackening, and polishing.⁵ The metalsmith makes the mould and casts any of a variety of vessels, utensils, decorative objects, or furniture parts. *Bidri* ware is made from a predominantly zinc-based alloy, along with smaller amounts of lead, copper, and/or tin.

After modelling on a lathe, the surface of the piece is blackened with a solution of copper sulphate and given to the engraver who carves the required decorative designs; typically flowers, scrolling vines, landscapes, animals, geometric patterns, and poetic or dedicatory calligraphy. Thin plates or wires of silver, brass, and/or gold are then beaten into the incised pattern by the inlayer, who also gives the base ground its final black appearance by treating the object again with a paste made of mud mixed with ammonium chloride, sodium chloride, and a number of other chemical components. Finally, the surface is polished with a mixture of oil and charcoal powder, rinsed, and a brilliant sheen imparted through repeated rubbings.

Varieties of Inlay

The inlaid ornamentation of *bidri* ware is produced through several varying and often combined techniques and materials. In the Deccan and Eastern India, it is most typically made by the inlaying of sheets of precious metals (*tehnishan*) or by the inlaying of single strands of wire (*tarkashî*). The inlaid designs are then rendered flush and burnished (*zarnishan*). In contrast, the ornamentation of *bidri* from Lucknow is often done in bold relief (*zarbuland*), in which the inlaid metals are allowed to remain protruding slightly above the surface and are then further adorned with incised motifs or additional gold overlay.⁶ Consequently, the varied surface textures of Lucknow *bidri* ware enhance its textile stimulation and aesthetic appreciation.

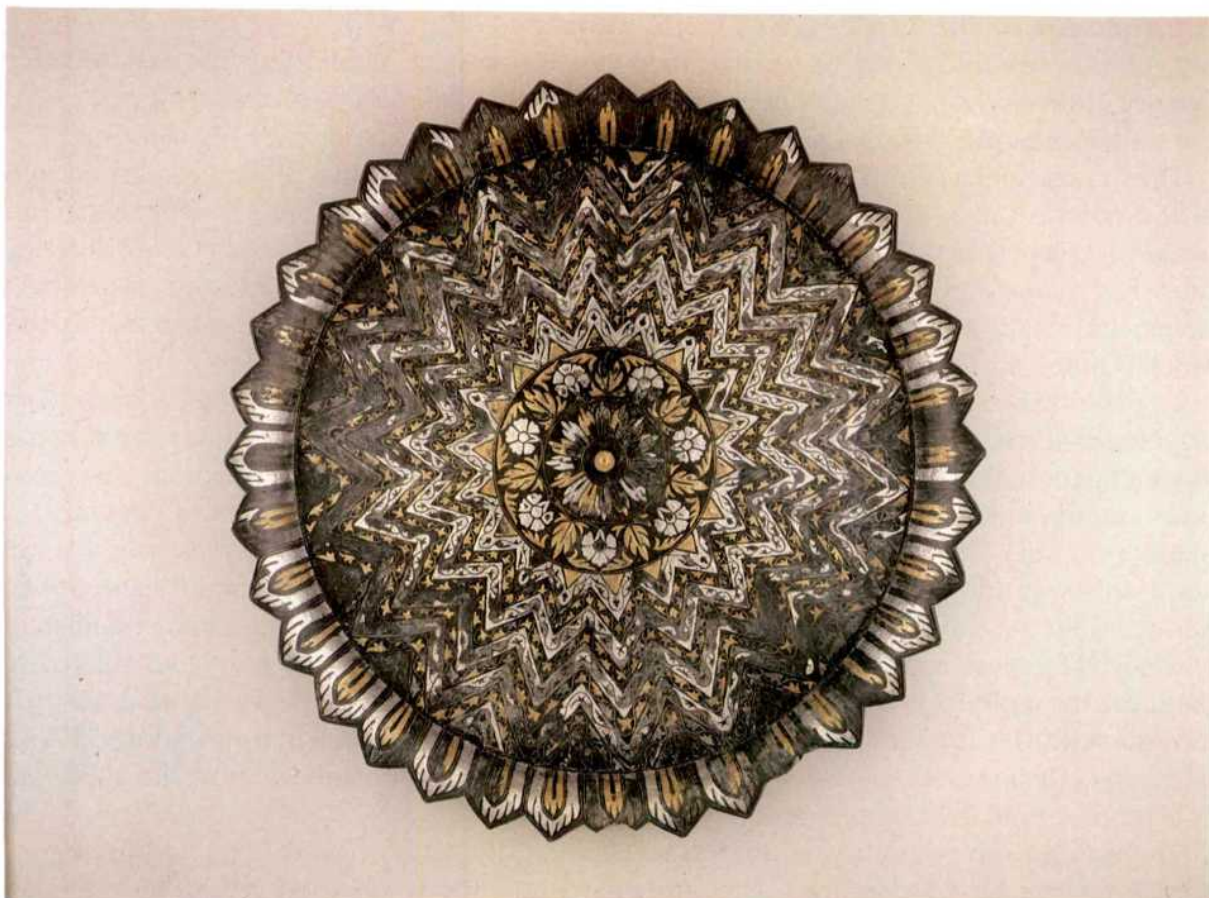
Apart from a few other less common inlay techniques, the remaining major method of ornamentation used entails a sheet of silver being overlaid onto the surface of the base metal and the designs then cut out in silhouette (*aftabi*).

Regardless of technique, silver was the favoured metal used for inlaying in all major centres of production of *bidri* ware from the earliest examples to the present day. Brass was confined to the Deccan and generally ceased to be inlaid after 1725.⁷ Gold was often mixed with the brass in early Deccani examples, and in the late nineteenth century was especially preferred as an overlay material on Lucknow *bidri* ware.⁸

Significant Collections of *Bidri* Ware

The exotic nature and striking appearance of *bidri* ware has long interested both Indian and Western collectors. Major collections of the acclaimed metalware survive in India in the Salar Jung Museum, the Government Museum, and the Jagdish and Kamla Mittal Museum of Indian Art, Hyderabad; the National Museum, New Delhi; the Prince of Wales Museum of Western India, Bombay; the Indian Museum, Calcutta; and the State Museum, Lucknow. In the West, the major holdings are in the Victoria and Albert Museum (especially important because of the recorded provenance details of the date and circumstance of their acquisition) and The British Museum, London; the Österreichisches Museum für angewandte Kunst, Vienna; and a number of private collections.

The beautiful ornamentation techniques employed in the making of bidri ware in the Deccan and Eastern India were most often made possible by the inlaying of sheets of precious metals (tehnishan) or of single strands of wire (tarkashi). The technical process used to produce the distinctive metalware was complex and flourished at Bidar and Hyderabad from the late sixteenth to the nineteenth centuries, with the seventeenth century witnessing its artistic zenith.



1. Salver. Bidar. C. 1650-1700. Height: 3.8 centimetres, diameter: 45.1 centimetres. The Nasli M. Heeramanek Collection, Gift of Joan Palevesky. M. 73.5.160.



2. Salver. Bidar. C. 1650-1700. Height: 1.9 centimetres, diameter: 33 centimetres. Gift of Anna Bing Arnold and the Indian Art Special Purpose Fund. M. 89.19.

A Catalogue of the Los Angeles Collection

Although currently far less extensive than the collections mentioned, the Los Angeles County Museum of Art does contain a number of notable examples of *bidri* ware. There are nine works in this collection, all of which are from the Hyderabad-Bidar region.

They range in date from c. 1650 to c. 1900, and are representative of the broad spectrum of forms found in *bidri* ware. The collection consists of two circular salvers (*thalis*), an octagonal plate (*tashtari*), two water-pipe bases (*buqqa*), a round container (*paandan*) for prepared *paan* leaves, the popular Indian and South-east Asian betel-nut digestive,⁹ two spittoons (*ugaldan*) necessary for disposing of the masticated betel-nut residue, and an elaborate candelabrum (*shamadan*).

The two salvers (figs. 1 and 2) are not only the earliest *bidri* ware objects in the Los Angeles collection—both are from Bidar and date from c. 1650-1700—but they are also the most elegant in their design, conception, and execution. Both display elaborate silver and brass ornamentation. The larger (fig. 1) of the two trays (45.1 centimetres in diameter) is made primarily in a combination of sheet inlay and overlay techniques, with some additional wire inlay. It has a central medallion with two rings of floral and foliate motifs. Surrounding the medallion is an intricate pattern of concentric zigzag bands embellished with scrolling vines.¹⁰ The strong geometric nature of the decoration is reflective of its early date, for the influence of Mughal floral imagery soon became so pervasive that abstract designs fell from favour. The salver is edged with a raised crenellated rim adorned with flame-like designs. A large *buqqa* base with identical decoration, now in a private collection, originally complemented the tray.¹¹

The second salver (33.0 centimetres in diameter, fig. 2) is created in a combination of wire and sheet inlay techniques. The wire inlay of the former method is used to represent the rippled waters of a pond, in which are portrayed blossoming lotus plants formed by sheet inlay. Like the previous tray, this one also has a central medallion, but here the ring



3. Plate. Hyderabad. C. 1800. 19.3 x 26.1 x 1.2 centimetres. Gift of Margot and Hans Ries. M. 89. 131.4.

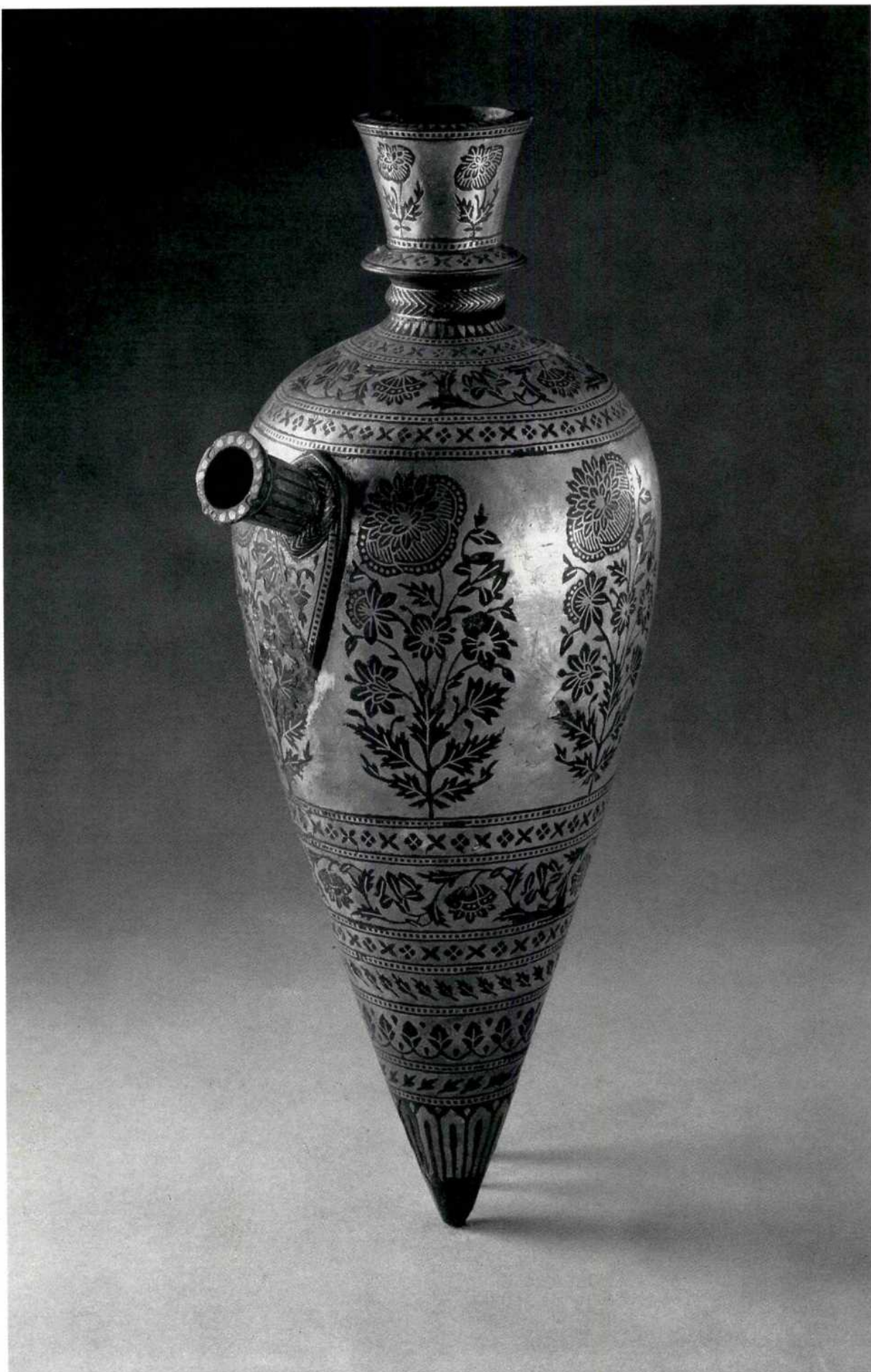
When Sir Jadunath Sarkar translated sections of "Chahar Gulshan," a history of India in Persian, there came to light what was probably one of the earliest references to bidri manufacture. In spite of only vague allusions to the correct origins of the craft, what emerged was an interestingly descriptive note which mentioned:

"In this province (Bidar) the excellent and valuable bidri pots are manufactured, (such as) the pan dan, ab-khora, rekabi, small and large cups, hukka, candlesticks and other things; different sorts of flowers are inlaid on them with gold and silver by the artisans of this place so delicately and nicely that even a painter cannot picture them in his imagination."



4. *Huqqa* Base. Hyderabad or Bidar. C. 1750-1800. Height: 16.5 centimetres, diameter: 15.9 centimetres. Gift of Dr and Mrs Pratapaditya Pal. M. 89.131.4.





5. *Huqqa* Base. Hyderabad or Bidar. Nineteenth century. Height: 26.7 centimetres, diameter: 10.8 centimetres. Indian Art Special Purpose Fund. M. 81.181.

of floral motifs parallels the surrounding lotus field and the interior has a radiant design reminiscent of a sunburst. The lip of this salver is much lower than that of figure 1, and continues the same aquatic and vegetal pattern found on the ring around its central medallion. The depiction of water is a conventional but somewhat infrequent motif on Deccani *bidri* ware and other decorative arts. It is often enhanced with flowering plants, as shown here, or with various creatures of the sea.¹²

The remaining examples of *bidri* ware in the Los Angeles County Museum of Art all date from the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, and thus represent the mature stylistic phase of Deccani *bidri* ware. Dating from c. 1800 and probably made in Hyderabad, the third piece of *bidri* flatware in the collection (fig. 3) is smaller than the previous salvers and presumably functioned as a plate rather than a tray.¹³ The octagonal plate is manufactured with the combined techniques of silver sheet and wire inlay and silver overlay. Its decoration consists of alternating bands of stylized floral and vegetal motifs, and a tiered rim formed by a concave transition to an outer level step.

Of all the myriad vessel and decorative art-forms found in *bidri* ware, *buqqa* bases used for smoking tobacco far outnumber the rest in both extant examples and contemporary painted representations.¹⁴ The Los Angeles collection contains two *bidri buqqa* bases. The earlier work (fig. 4) dates from c. 1750-1800 and is fashioned in the flat-bottomed style, which first appeared in Indian painting in the mid-seventeenth century and by the middle of the eighteenth had become exceedingly common both in painting and surviving examples.¹⁵ The *buqqa* base is adorned in silver with sheet and wire inlay in the form of six flowering plants, derived ultimately from the Mughal artistic traditions codified during the reign of the emperor, Shah Jahan (1628-1658).¹⁶ Bands of primarily vegetal motifs complete the decoration of the vessel.¹⁷

The second *buqqa* base in the collection (fig. 5) dates from the nineteenth century and is fashioned in the shape of an inverted flower bud. It has two openings used for connecting



6. *Paandan*. Hyderabad or Bidar. C. 1800. Height: 10.2 centimetres, diameter: 14.6 centimetres. Gift of Margot and Hans Ries. M. 81.278.4a, b.



7. Spittoon. Hyderabad or Bidar. C. 1850. Height: 19.7 centimetres, diameter: 14.9 centimetres. Gift of Margot and Hans Ries. M. 81.278.3.

the inhalation tube and combustion bowl, rather than only one as in the previous example. Both the inverted bud shape and the different style of function may reflect Middle Eastern influence, as these features are found also in contemporary Iranian *huqqa* bases. The base is ornamented with silver in the sheet overlay method, with cut-out representations of large flowering poppy plants and a number of narrow bands of scrolling vines and geometric motifs. Poppies first appear in Hyderabad painting during the first half of the eighteenth century and on Deccani *bidri* ware after c. 1775.¹⁸ They continued to be an extremely popular motif throughout the nineteenth century, but have mostly disappeared from modern design which favours geometric patterns.

Following *huqqa* bases in the number of surviving examples, but exceeding them in the range of affiliated paraphernalia, are the *bidri* ware accoutrements used in the popular social custom of chewing betel-nut. In the sixteenth through mid-nineteenth centuries, ornate round or polygonal containers (*paandan*) were used to offer guests the already stuffed and folded *paan* quids. By the late nineteenth century, elaborate betel sets had evolved with compartments for holding the various ingredients and spices of the delicacy and the implements used to prepare it.¹⁹

The *bidri paandan* in the Los Angeles County Museum of Art (fig. 6) dates from c. 1800, and is circular with concave sides and a pointed convex dome. There are no interior compartments. The ornamentation of the box consists solely of silver wire inlay, out of which are represented Mughal floral sprays, scrolling tendrils and blossoms, small amoeba-like cloud swirls inherited from Chinese pictorial conventions through Iranian painting, and an overlapping leaf design on the peak of the dome.

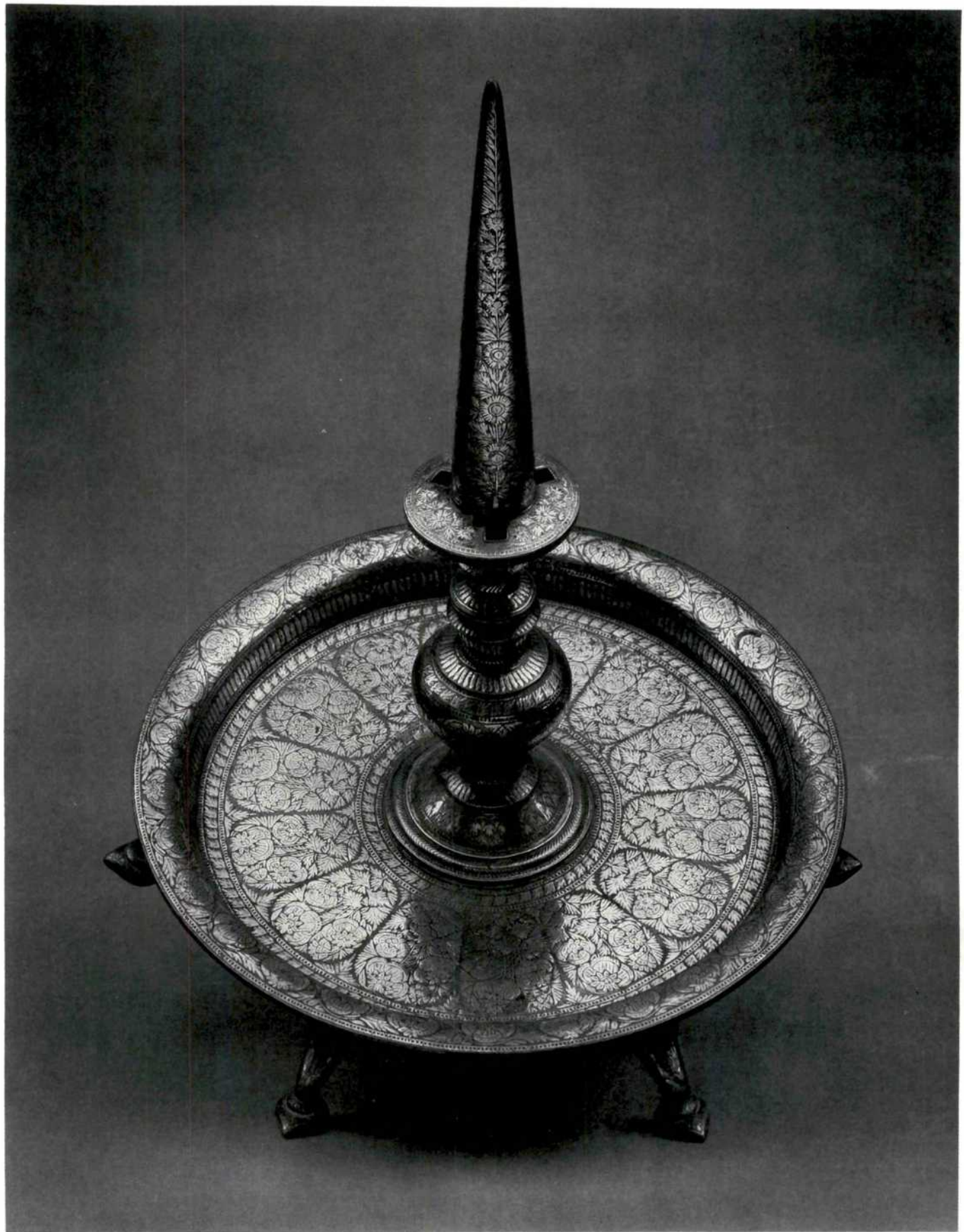
An essential, although perhaps slightly unsavoury, aspect involved in the enjoyment of betel-nut is the discarding of the fragmentary nut and leaf remnants. Spittoons were therefore necessary, and these were accordingly fashioned out of *bidri* ware to complete the extravagant betel sets. Like the other set components, spittoons underwent their own stylistic evolution. Those made in the seventeenth century were relatively small and simple in conception, while the form of later examples seems to have been created by joining a flat-bottomed *huqqa* base to an inverted one, minus its base plate.²⁰

There are two spittoons of this latter style in the Los Angeles collection, both of which are adorned with silver floral motifs made from the sheet inlay techniques. The first spittoon (fig. 7) has stylized flowering plants within rounded cartouches, and probably dates from c. 1850. The decoration of the second spittoon (not illustrated) consists of poppy flowers and other blossoms atop tall foliate stems, all appearing inside vertical bands rather than cartouches. The more exuberant, less formalized composition suggests a slightly later date of execution, probably in the second half of the nineteenth century.

Beginning around the middle of the nineteenth century, *bidri* ware production was revitalized due to greater European influence and the demand stimulated by the international exhibitions held in London in 1851 and Paris in 1855, and by those held later in the century at Philadelphia in 1876, Melbourne in 1880, and across India in the 1880s.²¹ Representative of the conceptual and stylistic renaissance of the mid-nineteenth century, the largest and most elaborate example of *bidri* ware in the Los Angeles County Museum of Art is a tripartite candelabrum with silver overlay attributed to c. 1850 (figs. 8 and 9). The bottom tray is ornamented with poppy plants densely grouped within tapering cartouches, while the armature and central spire have scrolling or climbing blooms and foliage. The base of the central spire owes its origin to European vase forms, while the clichéd and visually misunderstood “leonine” form of the splayed feet of the tray reveals a remote heritage from Iranian metalwork.

The nine examples of *bidri* ware in the Los Angeles County Museum of Art exemplify the wide range of forms and sophisticated artistic expression found in this unique type of the Indian metalware from Hyderabad and Bidar. Being an imaginative, handmade creation, it is small wonder that to the impassioned devotees of a more romantic, pre-industrialized era, Indian decorative art, particularly *bidri* ware, was to be admired and





8. Candelabrum, Hyderabad or Bidar. C. 1850. Height: 49.5 centimetres, diameter: 36.2 centimetres. Gift of Corky and Don Whitaker. M. 83.218.7a-d.

9. Detail of Figure 8: Tray and Spire Surface.

glorified. As the respected art theorist Owen Jones exclaimed in his landmark publication, *The Grammar of Ornament*, the complex decorative designs on the *bidri huqqas* in the 1851 London exhibition were:

...all remarkable for great elegance of outline, and for such a judicious treatment of the surface decoration that every ornament tended to further develop the general form....In the equal distribution of the surface ornament over the grounds, the Indians exhibit an instinct and perfection of drawing perfectly marvellous.²²

NOTES

1. *Chabar Gulshan*, book 2, British Library manuscript, Or. 1791, fol. 88. The text is a history of India written in Persian in 1759 but apparently compiled in c. 1720. This brief entry from a survey of Mughal provinces is the earliest known account of *bidri* ware. Quoted and discussed in Susan Stronge "Metalwork: Bidri Ware," in *Islamic Heritage of the Deccan*, George Michell, ed., Bombay, Marg Publications, 1986, p. 111; and Susan Stronge, *Bidri Ware: Inlaid Metalwork from India*, London, Victoria and Albert Museum, 1985, pp. 15-16.
2. Although zinc-based alloys and metal inlaying were known in ancient Iran, no examples comparable to *bidri* ware have survived. See James W. Allan, *Persian Metal Technology: 700-1300 A.D.*, London, Ithaca Press, London, 1979.
3. This typically hyperbolic attribution to a famous personage should be regarded with caution.
4. Krishna Lal, *National Museum Collection: Bidri Ware*, New Delhi, National Museum, 1990, pp 1-2; and Stronge, *Bidri Ware*, p. 15. For a late nineteenth-century account of *bidri* ware, see T. N. Mukharji, *Art Manufactures of India (specially compiled for the Glasgow International Exhibition, 1888)*, Calcutta, Government of India, 1888; reprint ed., New Delhi, Navrang, 1974, pp. 180-86.
5. Lal, *Bidri Ware*, pp. 5-8; and Stronge, *Bidri Ware*, pp. 11-13.
6. See Shahir M. Naqvi, "Bidri Ware with Special Reference to its Collection in the State Museum, Lucknow," *Journal of Indian Museums*, 36, 1980, pp. 101-7; and T. N. Mukharji, "Bidri Ware (of Lucknow)," *Journal of Indian Art and Industry*, 1:6, April 1885, pp. 41-44.
7. Mark Zebrowski, "Bidri: Metalware from the Islamic Courts of India," *Art East*, 1, 1982, pp. 27-ff.
8. See Stephen Markel, "An Indian Scabbard Chape in the Cincinnati Art Museum and Related Luxury Arts of Lucknow," *Arts of Asia*, September-October, 1992; in press.
9. For a concise historical account of betel-nut in Indian art and culture, see Stronge, *Bidri Ware*, p. 35; and Vishakha N. Desai, *Life at Court: Art for India's Rulers, 16th-19th Centuries*, exh. cat., Boston, Museum of Fine Arts, 1985, pp. 138-41.
10. Compare a slightly later *bidri* tray with a related zigzag pattern now in the Salar Jung Museum. See Jagdish Mittal, "Indo-Islamic Metal and Glassware," in *An Age of Splendour— Islamic Art in India*, Karl Khandalavala, ed., Bombay, Marg Publications, 1983, p. 65, fig. 10.
11. Mark Zebrowski, personal communication to the author, 6 February 1991. See his major study of Indian metalware, forthcoming.
12. Compare a *bidri* salver with various real and fanciful sea creatures now in the Salar Jung Museum. See Anil Roy Choudhury, *Bidri Ware*, Hyderabad, Salar Jung Museum, 1961, p. 30, fig. 25.
13. Compare a tray and plate respectively attributed to eighteenth and nineteenth-century Hyderabad in the National Museum, New Delhi. See Lal, *Bidri Ware*, pp. 119 and 121, cats. 142 and 147.
14. For a concise historical account of *huqqas* in Indian art and culture, see Stronge, *Bidri Ware*, pp. 33-35, and Desai, *Life at Court*, pp. 142-46.
15. Stronge, *Bidri Ware*, p. 34, n. 8; and Zebrowski, "Bidri", p. 29. *Huqqa* bases were spherical prior to the development of flat-bottomed ones, and support rings were needed to keep them upright. The Los Angeles collection does not contain any spherical *huqqa* bases of *bidri* ware, but it does include a number of glass ones. See Stephen Markel, "Indian and Indianate Glass Vessels in the Los Angeles County Museum of Art," *Journal of Glass Studies*, 33, 1991, pp. 82-92.
16. See *Romance of the Taj Mahal*, exh. pub. by Pratapaditya Pal et al, Los Angeles, Los Angeles County Museum of Art, London, Thames and Hudson, 1989.
17. Compare a slightly later *huqqa* base with similar but more stylized floral motifs now in the National Museum, New Delhi. See Lal, *Bidri Ware*, p. 60, cat. 51.
18. Stronge, *Bidri Ware*, p. 58, cat. 22; and Mittal, "Metal and Glassware," p. 67.
19. Mark Zebrowski, "Ornamental Pandans of the Mughal Age," in *Symbols and Manifestations of Indian Art*, Saryu Doshi, ed., Bombay, Marg Publications, 1984, p. 34.
20. Desai, *Life at Court*, p. 141, cat. 120.
21. Stronge, *Bidri Ware*, pp. 24-29.
22. Owen Jones, *The Grammar of Ornament*, London, Bernard Quaritch, 1868, pp. 78-79.

Deccani Drawings

Reflections On Life

— *Shehbaz H. Safrani*

Drawings capture the immediate rendering of creativity. The basic lines and contours, first attempts at sketching shadows, checking colour for a later painting, changes evolved in composition, and overdrawn figures, are all aspects initially registered in drawings.

A number of connoisseurs have found drawings fascinating. European and American art collectors scrutinized them rather thoroughly.¹ Numerous eminent collectors of paintings of the Old Masters began acquiring drawings as a means to enhance an appreciation of their execution. Some collectors have concentrated solely on drawings² and of late, there are art dealers specializing only in drawings from the West.³

Drawings feature prominently in the art education of individuals apprenticed to ateliers, both in Europe and India. Because of their universal recognition the drawings of the Mughals were of primary concern to collectors.

Drawings of the Deccan are scarce; those of exceptional quality, rare. Yet, certain examples of Deccani drawings remain exceedingly beautiful and are excellent blueprints for viewing the secluded world of Deccani painting. Using the bistre of ink common to Indian drawings, Deccani drawings also reveal considerable aspects of the Deccani psyche. The few drawings illustrated here strike us with their candour, bringing us closer still to that realm where a relaxed outlook on life was an integral part of the world Deccani artists sought to capture.

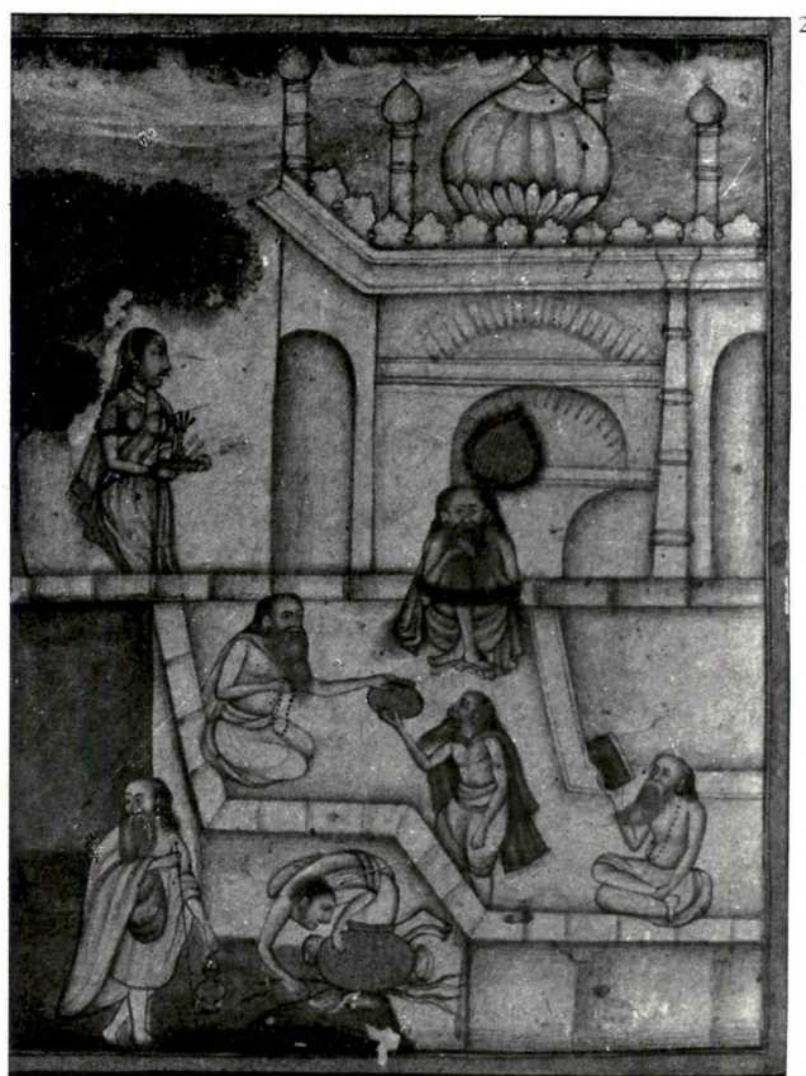
Some of the drawings — possibly preparatory studies for the fantastic stucco designs at Golconda — involve lines that have a magical quality, a swirling movement, heightened by light touches of colour.⁴ Set within these baroque spirals, a range of savage adventures

occurred, such as the encounter between the mythical beasts, the simurg and the dragon. Derived from Chinese as well as Near Eastern sources, the might and majesty of such creatures found favour among Muslim patrons of art. And those in the Deccan were no different from others in the Islamic world, who wished to be remembered for their aesthetic patronage as well.

Like some of the greatest Deccani paintings, Deccani drawings evoke the serenity, vital for peace of mind, and the abode of mystics who achieved this. Seated calmly beneath ancient trees, these sages seem to meditate on a plateau higher than the Deccan, while their enthused devotees appear seated or standing beside them.

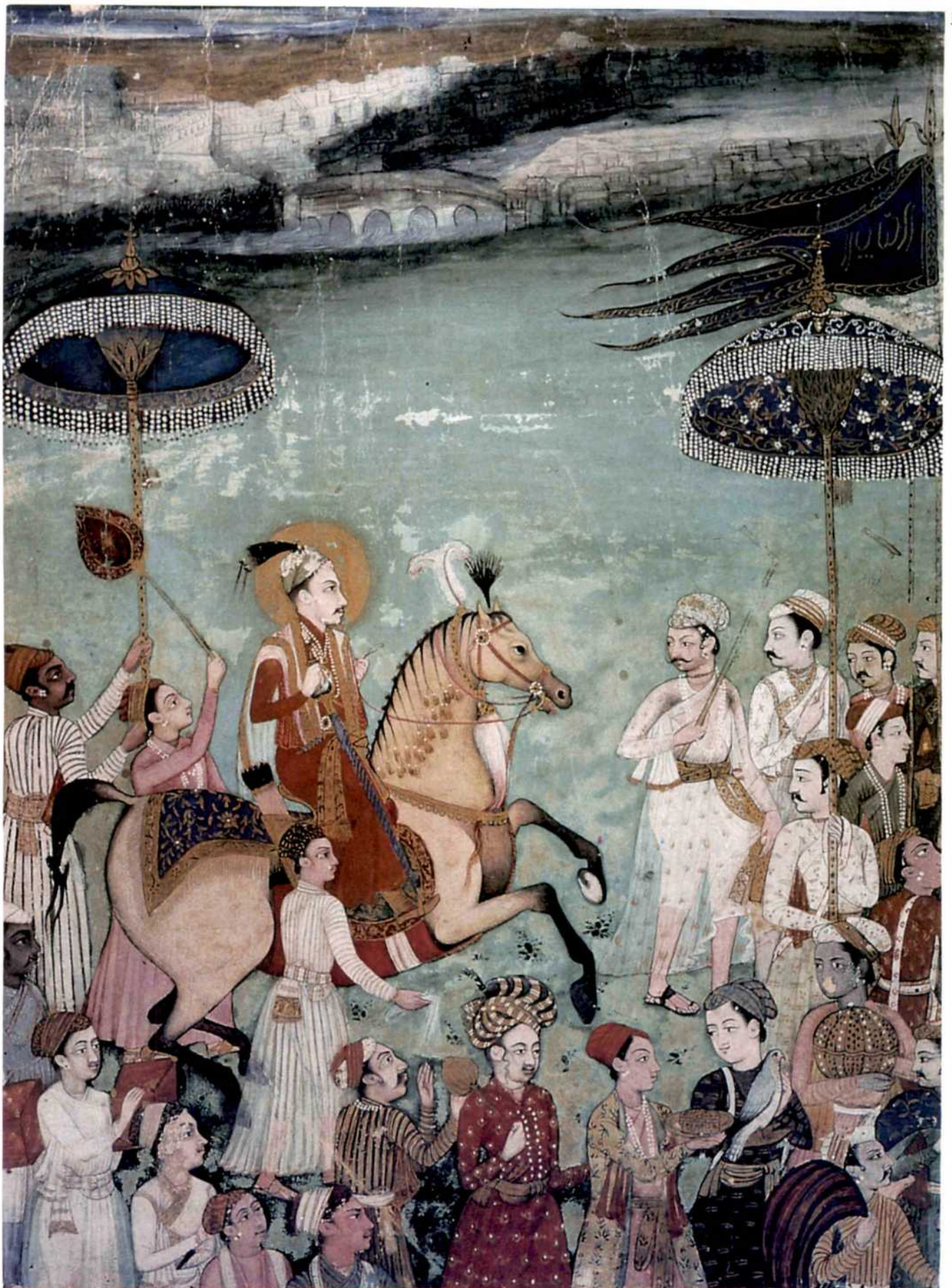
Learned mathematicians were in league with the sages who sought answers to universal mysteries. The origins of life, the perennial bounties of nature, the poetic injustices of the real world, and several abstract and abstruse questions were equally absorbing to both students of metaphysics and artists. It was to these spiritual and artistic quests that the Deccan made some splendid contributions.

Virtually every little corner of India still prides itself on believing in a local sage. The Muslim sages were no different from the rest, preferring a retreat similar to what Jesuits go for — a spiritual respite from their daily duties and services. A rock, a grotto, a stream, some ruined site, was fancied by the Indian sages. If shady trees grew in the vicinity, so much the better. For metropolitan visitors, such trips turned out to be a short pilgrimage.



1. *Sage*. Attributed to Asi. Mughal. 1600. Courtesy Colonel Raj Tandon Collection, Hyderabad.

2. *Sage in front of a Mosque*. North Deccan. C. 1645. Courtesy Colonel Raj Tandon Collection, Hyderabad.



3. *Equestrian Portrait of Sultan Abdullah Qutb Shah of Golconda*. Golconda. Mid-seventeenth century. Sotheby's, New York City. Photo: courtesy Sotheby's, New York City.

A particularly charming drawing in the collection of Colonel Raj Tandon in Hyderabad (fig. 1), captures just such a scene. Backed by a tiny temple, flanked by a performing musician, is a venerated sage relaxing on a tiger skin mat. Probably created in 1600 by Asi, brother of the famous Mughal painter Miskin (active 1580-1600),⁵ this drawing bears an inscription attributing it to Asi.⁶

A congregation of the sage's followers, one clasping his hands together, with others seated nearby, one cooking, even a dog resting shown at the lower right section of the drawing, has its prototypes in the Deccan as well.

Contrary to the Asi drawing with its Hindu subject, is a Deccani drawing (fig. 2) set against the backdrop of a mosque and obviously Muslim. Attributed to the North Deccan of about 1645, the spartan scene is hardly different from the Hindu in its spiritual endeavour. The central sage, portrayed with a reverse heart-shaped fan, draws the viewer within his intense gaze. The surreal lines of the open terrace where most of the sages are seated, preoccupied with their prayer, create a powerful drama. Unlike the man squatting beside a fire in the Asi drawing, a man similarly engaged in stoking one, strikes a most difficult pose here. The sari of the female devotee emerging from a grove to the upper left of the Deccani drawing supports its Deccani origins, as also does the architecture of the mosque. But it is the intensity of concentration of the main sage that ultimately has an impact, suggesting the extent to which Sufism had penetrated in the Deccan.

Glimpses of Imperial Ease

Varying from one ruler to the next, the life-style of patricians in the Deccan since the sixteenth century, can be observed from extant Deccani paintings and drawings. Uninhibited, completely at ease, relaxing, sketched in a state of inebriation, showing royals within the privacy of their secluded world, Deccani pictures of men and women, present us with some of the most refreshing aspects of art in the Muslim courts of the Deccan.

Indeed, Deccani paintings and drawings effectively demonstrate the imperial might of the kings, standing tall, their Deccani sword reaching as high as their rib cage. One finds them riding grandly, stiff upper lipped, part of a ceremonial procession, their trappings of power complete with flags in an impressive display.

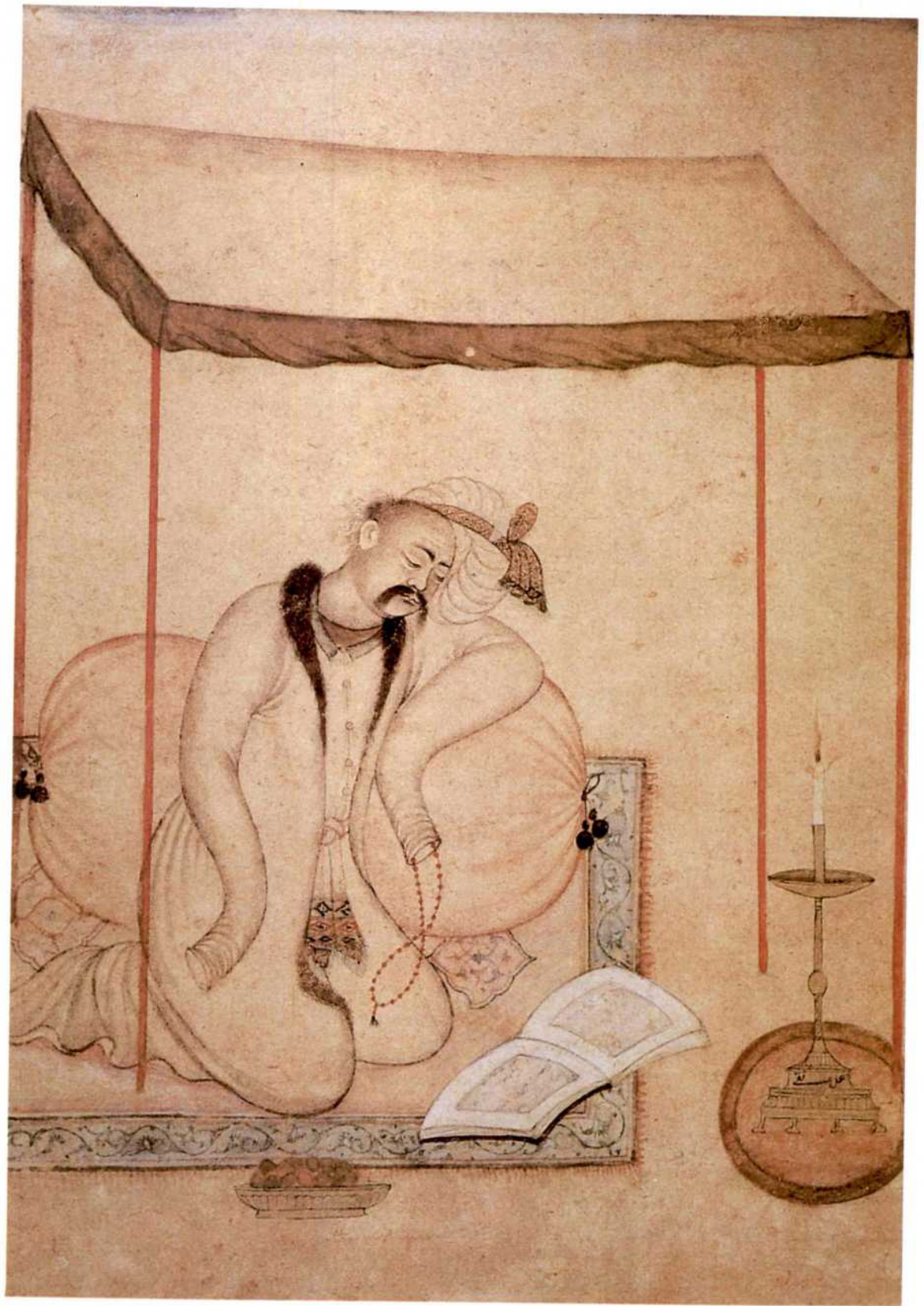
In a superb equestrian portrait of the seventh sovereign of Golconda, Abdullah Qutb Shah (fig. 3), the upper part of the painting particularly reflects seventeenth century Hyderabad.⁷ Stretching from the top right just above the flapping blue flags, to the top left touching the top of the king's ceremonial canopy, one is provided a fairly accurate architectural rendering of the city founded by his grandfather. The bridge with its five spans, symbolic of the Shia Panjatan to whom the Qutb Shahs showed profound obeisance, as well as the water of Hyderabad's arterial Musi River flowing beneath it, are clearly painted.

The provenance is riveting; executed by a Bikaner artist, Dutch and French inscriptions on the reverse mention its arrival in Europe in 1665, brought on the boat *L'Aigle Noir* whose captain Hugo Hollandois served as a founder of the French East India Company.

The monarch's profile, pencil-thin moustache, and pallor prove beyond doubt the distinguished Qutb Shahi physiognomy. An *angavastaram* or light stole, acquired from indigenous Hindu citizens of Golconda covers Abdullah Qutb Shah's shoulders. A gold halo enables one to visualize some of the authentic jewels and head adornments, such as the aigrette. Of the numerous equeuries, the one at the centre, dressed in bright orange with a white dotted dress, wears a turban in the manner of the Safavid court of Shah Abbas.

A 1630 drawing by the artist Naqi, *Drowsy Courtier Reading by Candlelight* (fig. 4),⁸ is a masterpiece of Deccani drawing. The orange supports of the canopy indicate the influence of late Yuan and early Ming Chinese paintings. Apart from Chinese, early Islamic idioms are also evident. The horizontal lines contrast with the vertical. But in the end, it is that psychological penetration, of capturing the onset of fatigue that contributes to Naqi's brilliance here. The large bolster, the courtier having pulled his hands in for warmth, the burning candle, the open book, the red rosary still held in the concealed left hand, a

Besides offering valuable insights into the Deccani psyche, such as some of the greatest Deccani paintings, Deccani drawings succeeded in evoking charming memories of the grand realm where a gentle, easy worldview was integral. Uninhibited, relaxed, finely appreciative of the good things of life, Deccani artists addressed subjects both natural as well as metaphysical.



4. *Drowsy Courtier Reading by Candlelight*. By Naqi. Deccan. C. 1630. Sotheby's, New York City. Photo: courtesy Sotheby's, New York City.

tempting charger, possibly of Chinese origin with fruit or dessert, all of these are marvellous elements. But the Chinese features of the official, the drooping moustache, and the loose strands of hair on the courtier's neck are all so detailed and with a mastery of the brush, that it is tempting to think of pencil studies of the Renaissance artist Dürer. Of course, there is no obvious connection but it shows the high standards the drawings reached in the mid-seventeenth century Deccan.

The Bijapur Drawings

The bond between man and beast will always be chronicled. Such a camaraderie between Atash Khan,⁹ the favourite elephant depicted in the glorious drawing of 1630-1650 of the same name, and his master, none other than the Bijapur sovereign Ibrahim Adil Shah II, marks the crowning achievements of Deccani drawings (fig. 5).

Ibrahim Adil Shah, as passionate a patron of architecture as Golconda's Muhammad Quli, excelled the Golconda monarch when it came to patronage of painting, or so one can judge from the evidence of Deccani art.

In Atash Khan, for once it is the majesty provided by the royal elephant that instantly captures our imagination. Handsomely caparisoned but with refined taste, the elephant's colours, not too different from those of the rocky terrain of the Deccan — shades of grey — stand out with the gold ornaments on its neck, body, and feet. The very swaying of the tail to whisk off flies is as arresting to observe as the dramatic treatment of the eyes. This sense of ease, of the understanding prevailing between the elephant and its rider, is remarkable. The ruler appears merely as an adjunct to the other rider atop a smaller elephant drawing our attention to the sixth king of Bijapur.

Though the spirit of this drawing is characterized by early seventeenth-century Bijapur painting, such as all the details of nature manifested here, rock formations, trees, and animals, the execution of the drawing style itself suggests the period between 1630 and 1650. Ibrahim Adil Shah II's son and successor, Muhammad, kept 'alive his august father's aesthetic vision.

The stylized rock formations with asparagus-like endings are reminiscent of similar geology in Chinese and Timurid paintings of the fifteenth century. From the visaged sun at the top right corner, the portrayal of elephants, the simians, and trees, as well as botanicals, and a spirit of humanism permeating through this drawing, indicates the extent of Indianization. Regardless of their origins, some of the most sensitive among the Muslim élite in the Deccan, embraced all the nuances of art and aesthetics that India offered.

Whether the type of architectural setting as observed here, palatial complexes, with dome and pyramid-shaped tops alluded to the biblical city on the hill is tempting to consider. As a matter of fact, including the hilly region of the Deccan Plateau in any topographical work is understandable. The aspiration to set up a city among the hills, as found in numerous Deccani paintings, is quite another subject. Because many of the finest Deccani works of art lacked a religious overtone, it is entirely possible that certain ideals, however oblique, may have been derived from biblical sources. In any case, theologians have long concurred with the common ground between Semitic and Christian scriptures.

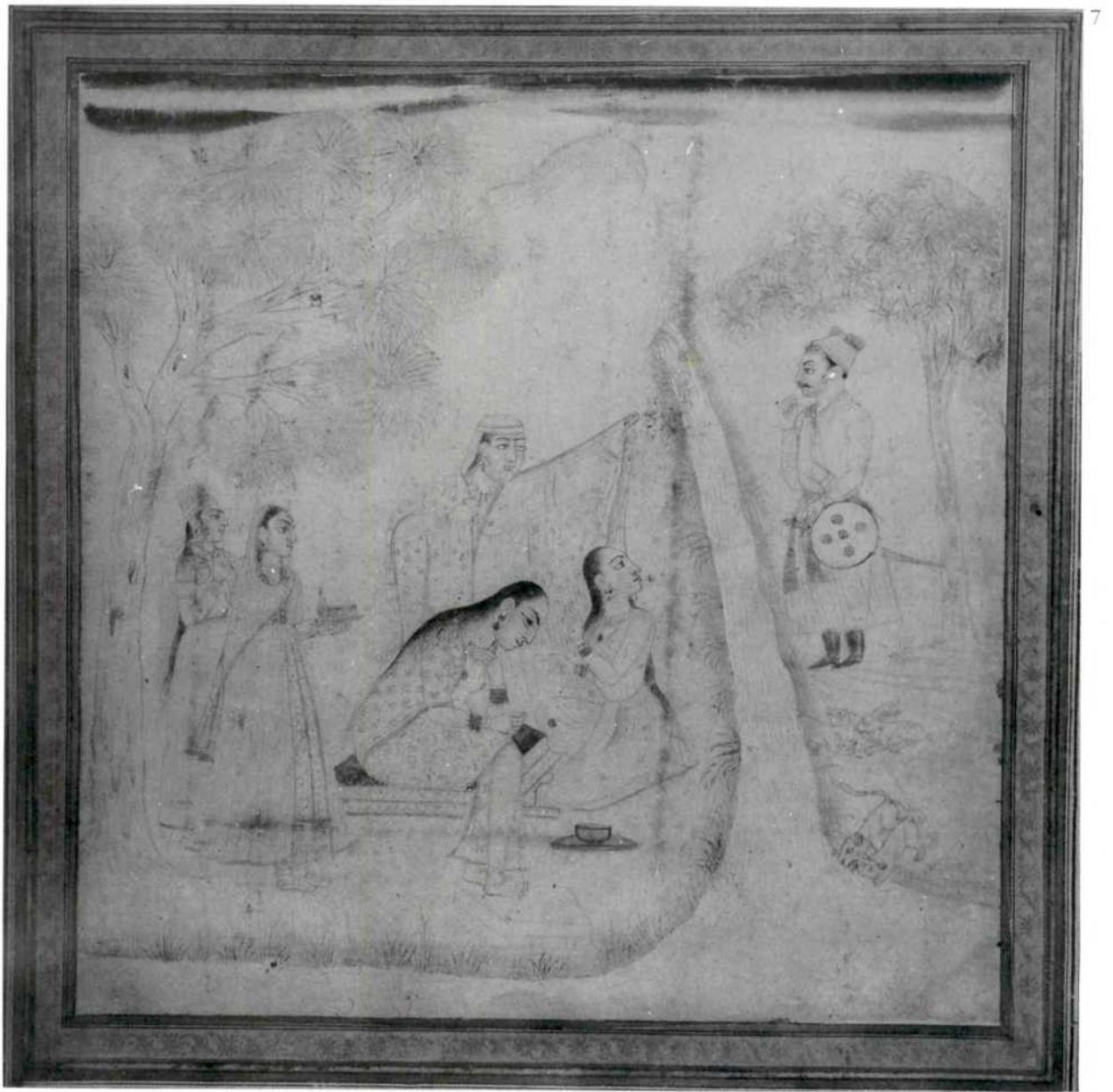
In the lower quarters of this incredible drawing executed at Bijapur there are four charming studies of animals. To the extreme lower left, a predator is literally playing hide-and-seek with an alert buffalo. That feline sense of mischief is utterly brilliant and completely innocent, showing the excellent observation of the draughtsman who completed this drawing for Muhammad Adil Shah's remarkable atelier.

In the middle of the same register is a female elephant with two of her young, basking in the idyllic setting that can still be conjured up in the landscape of Bijapur. The great elephant, Atash Khan, belonging to Ibrahim Adil Shah, is known to have had a smaller elephant as companion, Chanchal. As part of the diplomatic exchanges and goodwill offerings between Delhi and the Deccan, Chanchal was presented to Emperor Akbar. But the trio here gives insights into the world of the Deccan and the world of pachyderms.

The scene is perfectly innocent and we are led to believe that the Canticles of St Francis of Assisi notwithstanding,¹⁰ Indians over a duration of time have established an exceptionally close relationship with animals. Deities of the Hindu pantheon would be unthinkable without their symbolic animal icons, the graceful Nandi serving Lord Shiva, the presence of Lord Vishnu suggested by the boar and so on. And lest the tiny squirrel whose ties with Lord Rama are so endearing among Indians, be forgotten, there are a number of them in this drawing too.

To the extreme right, at the bottom of this drawing, quasi human in pose and pensiveness, sits a monkey. Its eyes thoughtful, and its gaze inward, there can be little doubt that it is thinking. The tree against which it sits, supports a squirrel joyously eating almost in line with the tip of Atash Khan's tail. This ability of showing as varied scenes as prevail in nature in a drawing so small should again remind one that artists in India conceptualized the world as a microcosm. Such a universal scene could hardly be called a "miniature"; rather it is a drawing for an illuminated manuscript for the great sovereign Ibrahim Adil Shah, whose collection of songs and poems, *Kitab-e Naurus*, is a testimony to his profound love for music and the visual arts and architecture.

Another drawing from Bijapur, of 1670 (not illustrated), is a stupefying scene, demonstrating again that women to some extent held their own ground in the Islamic



7. *Prince Surprises Ladies Bathing*. Bijapur. 1675. Navin Kumar Collection, New York City.

Deccan. Muhammad Quli's daughter, Hayat Bakshi Begum (1590-1666), called Revered Mother, or Ma Saheba in Urdu, exerted great influence in Qutb Shahi Golconda.

Seated on a plinth with three small *jali* (grille) fences, her right hand gesturing, it is definitely a woman of power and prestige who commands nearly forty men. Among the male congregation, are bearded Hindu sages, at least one black African, and individuals wearing different headgear. Of these the most noteworthy is that preferred and worn in Bijapur, somewhat conical in shape, tightly wound in striation and with a circular segment protruding over the forehead.

It is a psychological study of political manoeuvring; some men appear combative, swords drawn. Stern conversation keeps others engaged, as seen from their intense concentration directed at one another. All this goes on among the men right of the seated patrician-politician. But judging from the men at the left of the drawing, many appear clapping, not an uncommon gesture at musicals, in particular those called *ghazals* or love lyrics among the Muslims. The Bijapur court during the kingship of Ibrahim Adil Shah II became renowned, his passion and dedication to music legendary. The soothing timbre of the stringed instrument is captured in the contemplative demeanour of many gathered here, as well as one seated officer directly across the royal lady, gently drawing on his *buqqa*, the famed hubble-bubble tobacco pipe. The architectural segment of the pavilion, with a veranda above and two other women in it, presents another angle to a casual but most fascinating drawing. The brisk strokes of colour to the sky show preparatory work and this is another example that may have been either for the artist or the patron, but in any event, a study.

The Submissive Lover (fig. 6),⁶ Bijapur, 1675, in the collection of Navin Kumar in New York City, is distinctly Persianized. The headgear of the two standing women is depicted in a three-quarter view, their attire is Safavid in spirit, though the hat of one seems to be Portuguese.¹¹ The lover on his knees presents the sort of attitude ordinarily unacceptable among Mughal patrons. It is clear that Deccani artists showed them as such, a relaxed mode that is pervasive throughout Deccani ateliers. The woman with a Portuguese hat is also pouring wine — the man is to be made inebriant. The light blue colouring on the wine vessel and the cup appears to suggest that both porcelains could be Chinese blue and white.

Also from the same collection is *Prince Surprises Ladies Bathing* (fig. 7),¹² Bijapur, 1675, indicating the extent to which some drawings of the Deccan are Indianized. The headgear is Bijapuri without a doubt, but the women at their toilet are innately Indian. Their jewellery and accoutrements are Indian. Equally remarkable are two small dogs at the lower right, feeding at the stream. Just above them are a few rabbits. This love of nature continues to be revealed as another characteristic of the Deccani School.

Golconda

A Princess Presented with a Peacock while Listening to Music (fig. 8), Golconda, 1680,¹³ is among the greatest drawings executed in the Islamic Deccan. One enters a secluded world, an ambience permeated with romance. Here are meticulously dressed women — their costume and jewellery and textile designs — as found in the Golconda kingdom. But it is the jewellery and the manner of adorning them that are also indicative of the Golconda origin.

Ali Raza and Rahim Dakhani acquired the Western facility for positioning human figures. This Golconda drawing was executed by a follower of Ali Raza and Rahim Dakhani. The borrowed European device apart, there is a tremendous creative force evident here that speaks for talented painters working in Deccani ateliers of the seventeenth century.

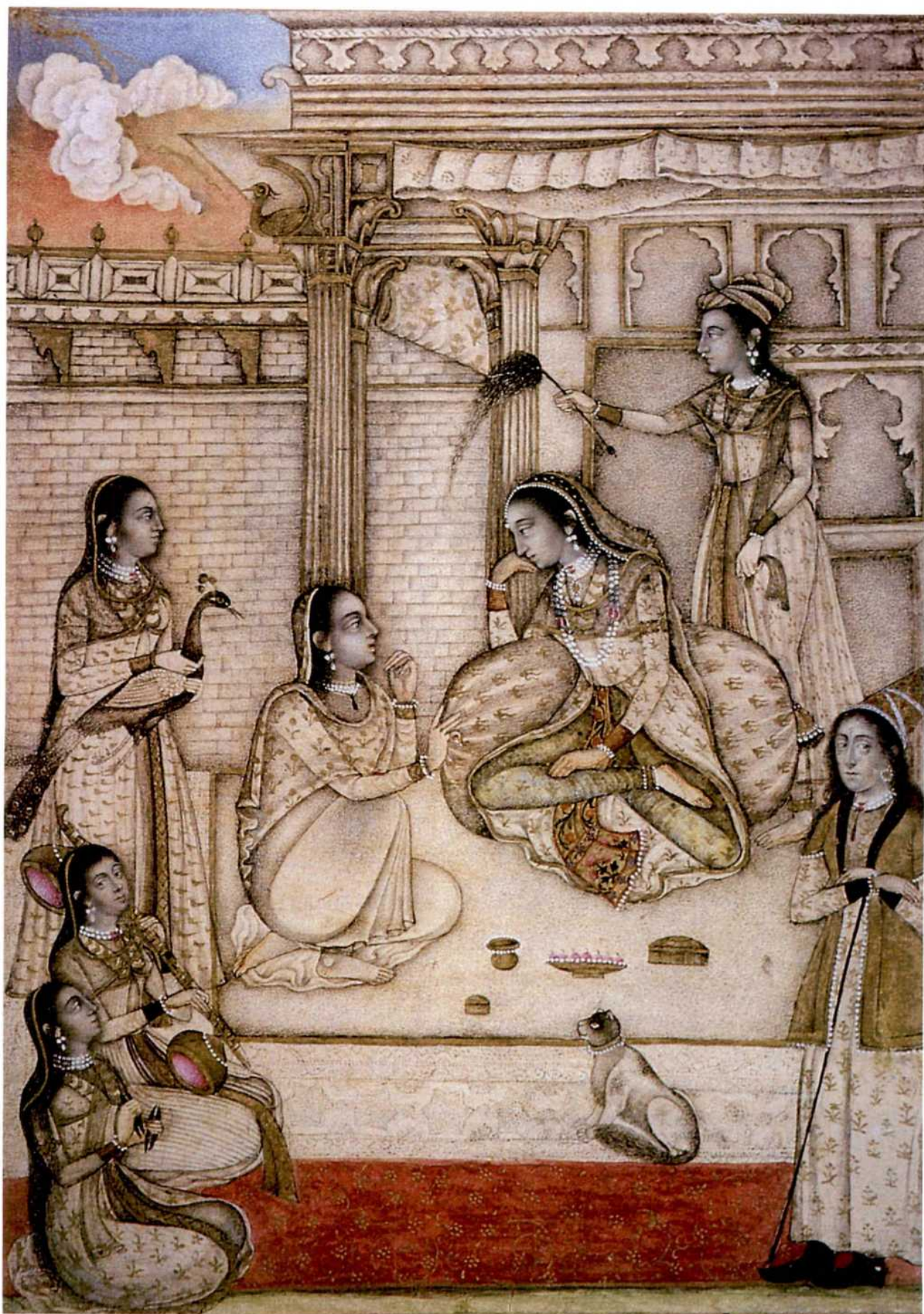
The top register of the pavilion and the tile pattern lightly stippled in the foreground, with a hexagonal design, also suggest Golconda. In the calm of an early evening as discerned from the coloured sky, this zenana setting evokes several things simultaneously. Preparation for celebrating an event, the attired women ready to serve, or continue performing their roles, also as musicians, set the scene for a private party. Or merely a setting for one of the paintings of musical modes, the *ragamala*. The almost casual drawing of a cat, mesmerized



5. *Sultan Ibrahim Adil Shah II Riding the Elephant Atash Khan*. Bijapur. 1630-1650. Sotheby's, New York City. Photo: courtesy Sotheby's, New York City.



6. *The Submissive Lover*. Bijapur. 1675. Navin Kumar Collection, New York City. Photo: Navin Kumar Collection, New York City.



8. *A Princess Presented with a Peacock while Listening to Music*. Golconda. 1680. Sotheby's, New York City. Photo: courtesy Sotheby's, New York City.

by the peacock, is a minor element but again, characteristic of the Deccani approach to life. The peacock's agitated state can be seen from its tightened claws, its mouth probably parched, partly open. The tinted drawing with gold is inscribed on the reverse with a brief description in Dutch.

Though limited in number, the precious few available to be illustrated tell us something about the Deccan. Having founded their kingdoms, completed mausoleums, and commissioned architecture on a heroic scale, they intended being remembered with warmth and affection — which they are. Contrary to the nomadic forays into Hindustan, the perennial animosities, and endless blood feuds, these kings and queens preferred the relatively remote realm on the Deccan Plateau. Beyond the claims they had staked, they aspired to reach the hearts and minds of their people; and in this they succeeded. These drawings show, more than anything, a penetrating psychological understanding of their rule, with its indescribable veneer of the mystical, derived in part from Sufism. But at a deeper level, there is little reason to doubt that these Muslims of the Deccan took pride in pleasure. Hedonism, inebriation, the leisure afforded by simply enjoying the bliss of nature, were known here.

The Deccani drawings take one a trifle closer to life in the sixteenth century and then centre around pleasure-loving kings. The need for "... aesthetic pleasures", is something the Welsh writer Jan Morris reminds us, "the pleasures of art and nature, perhaps if it were not for their calming influence we might all have annihilated each other by now".¹⁴

NOTES

1. Woodner Collection, *Master Drawings*, New York, The Metropolitan Museum of Art, 1990, pp. 377-380.
2. David Tunick, a New York City-based dealer specializing in drawings. Janos Schulz, an American violinist of Hungarian origin, New York City-based, who has collected only drawings.
3. Brian and Anna Haughton, *The International Antique Dealers Show*, New York City, 1991 (Mia N. Wiener, specialist and dealer in Old Master drawings), pp. 43 and 144.
4. Stuart Cary Welch, *India: Art & Culture 1300-1900*, New York, The Metropolitan Museum of Art, 1985, p. 313, pl. 210. Stuart Cary Welch, *Indian Drawings & Painted Sketches*, The Asia Society, 1976, p. 67, no. 28.
5. Philippa Vaughan, "Miskin," *Master Artists of the Imperial Mughal Court*, Pratapaditya Pal, ed., Bombay, Marg Publications, 1991, pp. 17-38.
6. Colonel Raj Tandon deciphered Persian texts for reading the inscriptions of the drawings in his distinguished collection. I am grateful also to the Indian Army and its head at Golconda and to Major P. Aggarwal for their help.
7. Sotheby's, *The Heeramanek Collection of Indian Sculpture, Paintings, and Textiles*, New York, 1988, p. 106, pl. 107.
8. Sotheby's, *Heeramanek*, p. 106, pl. 106.
9. Sotheby's, *Indian, Himalayan and Southeast Asian Art*, New York, 1989, pl. 91.
10. Francis Klingender, *Animals in Art and Thought*, Cambridge, Massachusetts, The MIT Press, 1971, pp. 439-446.
11. Pratapaditya Pal, *Court Paintings of India*, New York, Navin Kumar, 1983, p. 68.
12. Pal, *Court Paintings*, pp. 199-200. Both these Bijapur drawings are illustrated pls. D5 and D6.
13. Sotheby's, *Indian, Himalayan and Southeast Asian Art*, New York, 1990, pl. 68.
14. Jan Morris, *Pleasures of a Tangled Life*, London, Barrie and Jenkins, 1989, p. 7.

The Development of Mughal Painting

Usha Bhatia

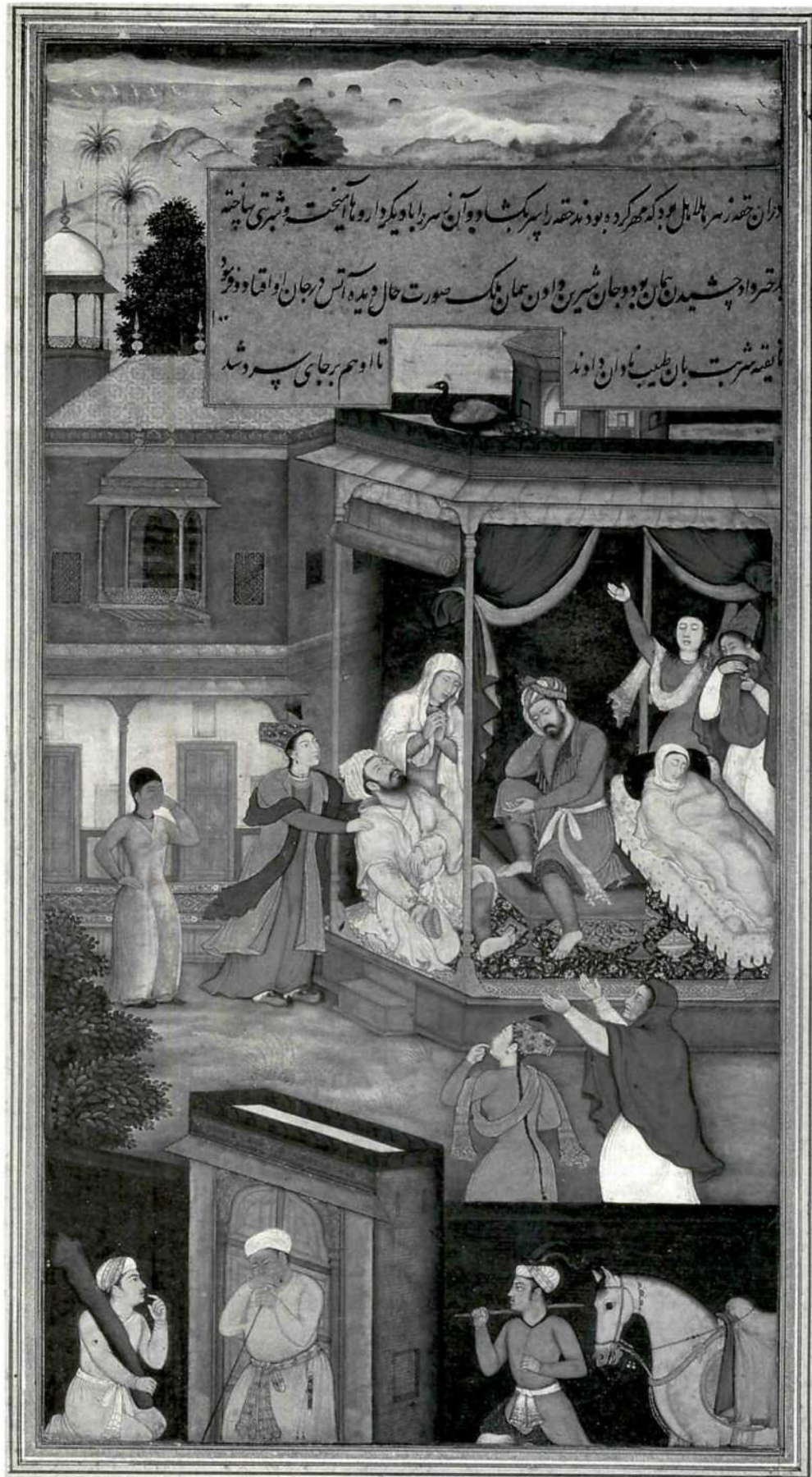
In 1526 Babur, a descendant of the Mongol warlord, Timur, defeated the last Sultan, Ibrahim Lodi, at Panipat. With this the foundation of the Mughal empire was laid, which lasted in India for over three hundred years. In his short reign of four years, Babur had no time to patronize art activities. He was succeeded by his son Humayun in 1530. Humayun lost his empire to the Afghan governor Sher Shah Suri in 1540 and was exiled. He went to the court of Shah Tahmasp of Persia, who had the most brilliant painting atelier in Iran.

With the help of Shah Tahmasp he established himself in Kabul, where he secured the services of a few excellent artists including Mir Sayyid Ali and Abd al-Samad, though it functioned in a Persian or Safavid style.

When Humayun recaptured his throne in 1555, both Mir Sayyid Ali and Abd al-Samad accompanied him to India. Humayun lived for only six months after his return to Delhi and never formed an atelier.

But the two Persian masters, Mir Sayyid Ali and Abd al-Samad, remained at the Mughal court and worked in the imperial library, with Abd al-Samad principally teaching calligraphy and Mir Sayyid Ali as a designer. The concept of a grand atelier was yet a dream for the young Akbar who plunged straightaway into saving the empire from disintegration after his father's death. From the day of his succession in 1556, Akbar at fourteen faced political rebellion and fought to save the Mughal empire. Moreover, there was great financial stringency with all available funds required for the army and administration.

1. *The Death of a Princess*. A folio from the *Aiyar-e-Danish*. Mughal School, Akbar period. 1598. Bharat Kala Bhavan, Varanasi. A physician's assistant having little knowledge had given poison instead of medicine to the ailing princess causing her death. The painting illustrates the king and courtiers in a pensive mood and women wailing the death of the young princess. The drawing is powerful and all its characters alive and expressive.





2. *The White Elephant*. Mughal School, Akbar period. C. 1585. Bharat Kala Bhavan, Varanasi. This painting is an idealized representation of a white elephant being brought to the court of Akbar. Such rare animals were welcome at Akbar's court. It is heavily bedecked with golden bells, plumes, and caparisoned with a red-gold brocade. The elephant is shown majestically standing under a canopy.

It was not till 1564 when the situation had somewhat improved, that Akbar could think of establishing an atelier of artists. A genius and a visionary ruler, he was always inspired by some important event or high ideology and conceived plans on a grand scale.

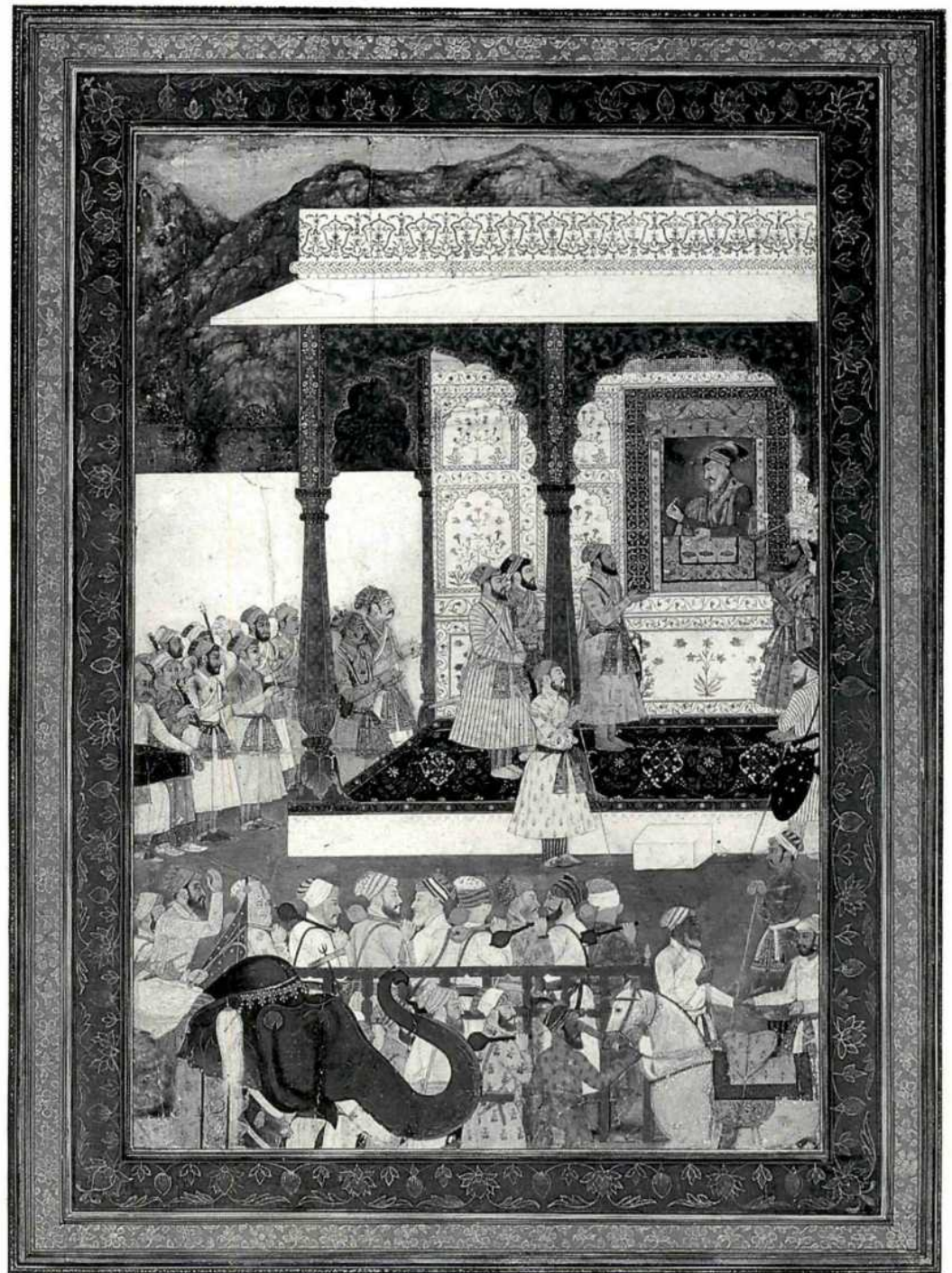
In 1564 when Akbar had consolidated his empire, he went to Narwar in Malwa on a dangerous expedition to capture wild elephants. After accomplishing the task the following day the court storyteller read to him the daring exploits of the daring hero of the *Hamza Nama*. Akbar's imagination was fired by the fantastic exploits and indomitable courage of Hamza, and he envisioned himself in the mortal role of the legendary hero. Having conceived the idea of a vast series of paintings of unusual size, he realized the need to set up an atelier in which a considerable number of Indian artists would have to be trained for a period of time by the two Persian masters before the atelier would be able to work on the great series.

Thus, Akbar with the resources of the Mughal court, was able to enlist skilled Indian artists from Uttar Pradesh, Rajasthan, Malwa, Gujarat, and the Deccan to form an atelier of at least thirty artists. Later, there were more than a hundred Indian artists employed in the imperial atelier. There were quite skilled painters who could be moulded to undertake the task, for even after the Lodi ruler in 1526 there had been a continuation of the Lodi style of painting in Northern India. Thus a grand school of Mughal painting started to function in 1567 with the commencement of the *Hamza Nama*.

Abul Fazl, a contemporary chronicler, mentioned in the *Ain-i-Akbari*, that many painters obtained a great reputation for perfect likeness, delicacy of line, and boldness of execution.

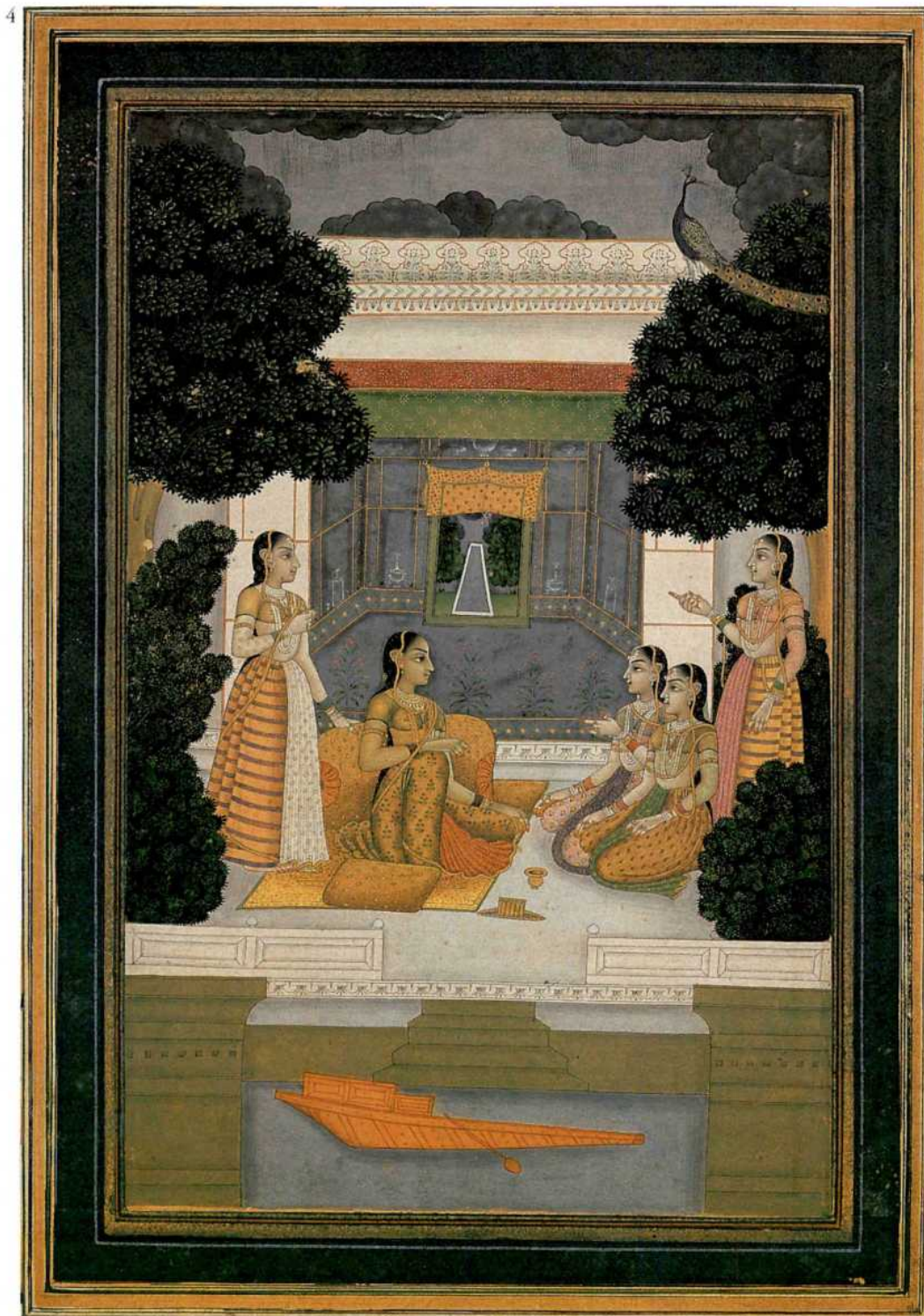
With the completion of the *Hamza Nama* project there commenced a new phase of the Akbar school, with a number of Hindu epics and Persian books being ornamented with illustrations such as the *Kalilah-Wa-Dimnah*, *Zafar Nama*, *Timur Nama*, *Razm Nama*, *Ramayana*, and *Hariwamsa* to name a few.

During the last two decades of Akbar's



3. *The Darbar of Shah Jahan*. Mughal School, Shah Jahan period. C. 1650. Bharat Kala Bhavan, Varanasi. Magnificent court scenes appear in the *Padshahnama* which later got dispersed. This is probably one of the folios of the dispersed royal album. The composition is well balanced by depicting Shah Jahan in a

corner and courtiers arranged in a row before him. An elephant salutes the emperor with upraised trunk. Shah Jahan is shown at an advanced age. The cusped arch, which was introduced in Shah Jahan-period architecture, is seen artistically surmounting the red and gilded pillars of the palace pavilion.



4. *A Princess with Maids*. Mughal School, Muhammad Shah period. C. 1740. Bharat Kala Bhavan, Varanasi. A royal lady in a pleasure pavilion is being entertained by her maids. The scene is set on an open terrace inside the

palace with water canals flowing. The grey sky and peacock on the parapet are indicative of the approaching rain. The painting has an air of elegance.

reign there was an assimilation to a certain extent of European techniques and iconographic symbols.

Akbar died in 1605 and his son Jehangir succeeded him. Jehangir had already founded a small studio under the Herati painter Aqa Riza in 1585 during his father's time. Mughal painting reached a high degree of excellence during his reign, but unlike Akbar he was not fond of getting manuscripts illustrated—instead, he commissioned brilliant portraits, court scenes, and superb studies of animals and birds. The *hashiyas* or borders of these paintings used to be decorated with fine floral patterns, sometimes also adding splendid birds and exotic flowers. Gold was used lavishly in these decorated borders, with cupids, Chinese dragons, and Persian simurghs being some of their main motifs.

Shah Jahan succeeded his father in 1627. As a prince, he was interested in painting like his father, and had his own collection of paintings consisting mainly of portraits, secular scenes, and European engravings. The most important album of his time is the *Padshahnama*, now in the Royal Library at the Windsor Castle. Like Akbar, he was also interested in having official accounts recorded and illustrated. These comprised formal *darbars*, religious ceremonies, and marriage processions. These paintings depict elaborate furnishings, carpets, jewels, princes, and courtiers wearing rich costumes standing in rows, processions of caparisoned horses and elephants.

Mughal painting suffered a setback in the reign of the bigoted emperor, Aurangzeb. Though some fine portraits and court scenes were painted in the imperial atelier, very few artists were left to do so. The subjects of the paintings changed from court scenes and hunting scenes to romantic scenes and firework displays in the court of Muhammad Shah who was known to be a luxury-loving ruler. The glory of Mughal painting during Muhammad Shah's time continued up to the nineteenth century.

Himalayan Marvels

Shebbaz H. Safrani

Travelling exhibitions have always broadened the public's knowledge of the visual arts. *Art of the Himalayas: Treasures from Nepal and Tibet*, curated by Dr Pratapaditya Pal, Senior Curator of Indian and Southeast Asian Art at the Los Angeles County Museum of Art, is among the most recent exhibitions organized and circulated by the American Federation of the Arts (AFA).

Founded in 1909, the AFA is America's oldest and most comprehensive visual arts programme. *Art of the Himalayas*, which opened at the Newark Museum in New Jersey in January this year was co-ordinated for the AFA exhibition by curator Marie-Therese Brincard. After being on view until March 1992, *Art of the Himalayas* will travel from the Newark Museum across America to numerous museums such as the Portland Art Museum, Phoenix Art Museum, Frick Art Museum, Virginia Museum of Fine Arts, Pacific Asia Museum, and Tampa Museum of Art, until the end of July 1993.

A first-rate 208-page catalogue, fully illustrated and written by Dr Pal with a contribution ("Ritual Textiles of Tibet") by Valrae Reynolds, Curator of Asian Art Collections, Newark Museum, makes the understanding of this complex subject a most delightful task. Ian Alsop provides the first appendix to Newari and Sanskrit inscriptions, while Heather Stoddard contributes the second appendix to Tibetan inscriptions. Published by the AFA and Hudson Hills Press, like the exhibition, the catalogue is titled *Art of the Himalayas: Treasures from Nepal and Tibet*. It includes individual entries for each item; a general introduction to the collection, essays on the arts of Nepal and Tibet in the context of their political and religious as well as artistic histories.

Essays on the sculptures and ritual objects, paintings and drawings from Nepal and Tibet, written by Dr Pal enhance the value of this book. A map of Tibet and Nepal at the beginning is followed by a bibliography and index at the end. The fine quality of paper, and excellent pictures, in colour and black and white, make reading the text a rare treat.

A New York-based family, the



Zimmermans have acquired this magnificent Himalayan art collection since the 1960s. More than wealth, it is dedication and enthusiasm that have governed their fine taste. Besides, as new collectors of Asian art should know, though prices have been rising, they still lag behind what Western art fetches.

Over one hundred and fifteen exhibits include extraordinary cast and repoussé sculptures, brilliantly coloured paintings on paper and cotton (called *thankas* in

1. Hevajra and Nairatmya. Western Tibet (?). Twelfth century. Brass with silver and colours. Approximately 32 x 24 x 6.5 centimetres. Private collection. Photo: courtesy The American Federation of Arts.



2. Head of Bhairava. Sixteenth century or earlier. Gilt copper with gem stones and paint. Approximately 76 x 94 x 36 centimetres. Private collection. Photo: O.E. Nelson/courtesy The American Federation of Arts.

Tibet and *paubhas* in Nepal). Adding meaning and substance to them are finely wrought textiles, as well as drawings from artists' and priests' sketchbooks.

No doubt, these wonderful sketchbooks transmitted artistic ideas and established styles that travelled from Nepal to Tibet.

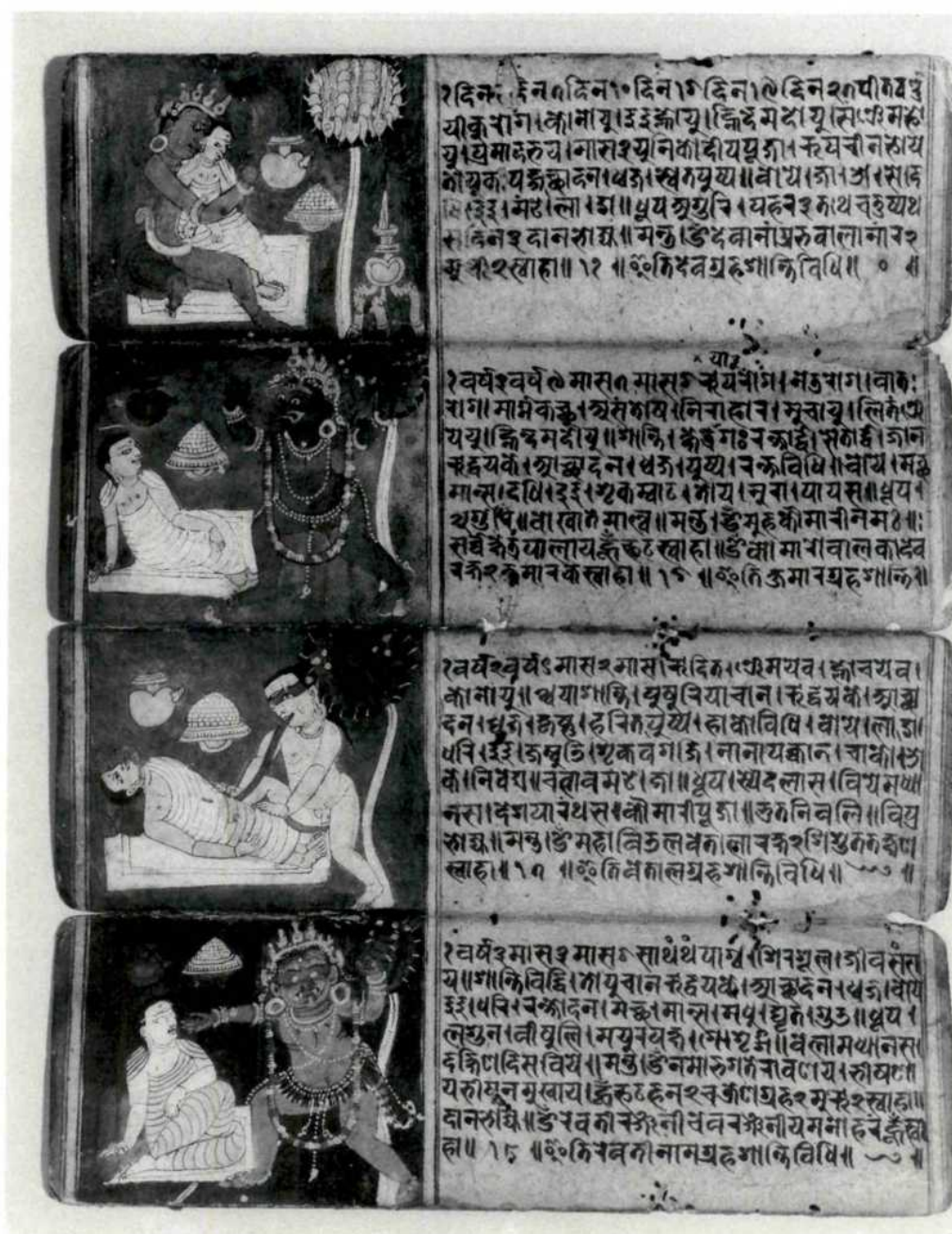
The aesthetic and the religious are interconnected in Himalayan art. The anonymous artists of the Himalayas shared their finest achievements for the cause of advancing the spiritual. Tibetan art is entirely Buddhist but that of Nepal includes both Hindu and Buddhist deities and myths. The Zimmermans' outstanding collection ranges in date from the seventh to the nineteenth century. Equally significant, it covers nearly every major period and style of the two traditions.

During the period when the art represented in this exhibition was created, both Nepal and Tibet were independent nations. Hinduism and Buddhism originated in India. Lumbini, the birthplace of the Buddha, is now within Nepal's borders. While it is not known exactly when the two religions established themselves, both faiths were flourishing in Nepal's Kathmandu valley by the fifth century. Nepal was an important artistic source for Tibet throughout its history and artists from this small Himalayan kingdom contributed to the Buddhist art in China in the thirteenth century.

Officially introduced from India in the seventh century, Buddhism proved a much more powerful force in Tibet than in Nepal and came to dominate almost every aspect of Tibetan life. Despite being relevant to only one religion, the Tibetan arts show greater variation in both type and style than Nepalese art. Though not as ancient as that of Nepal, the earliest Tibetan object in this exhibition dates from the tenth-eleventh century.

The exhibition requires more than one visit to assess its exceptional range: thirty Nepalese ritual objects; twenty Nepalese *paubhas* and drawings; twenty-six Tibetan sculptures and ritual objects; thirty-four *thankas* and six brocades.

With age, both the *paubhas* and *thankas*



have mellowed to such subtle shades that no photograph can capture the brilliance seen by the naked eye. Medieval and later patrons of art in the Himalayas, whether ecclesiasts or the secular elite, as seen from the Zimmerman collection, display extraordinary good taste and high standards of judging art.

Among the important objects included are a tenth-century brass and silver depiction of "Hevajra and Nairatmya" (figure 1) in a sexual embrace, the earliest

3. A Medico-Astrological Treatise. C. 1600-1650. Ink and colours on paper. Approximately 8 x 21 centimetres (closed), 28 x 21 centimetres as to be displayed, (4 pages open). Private collection. Photo: Robert E. Mates/courtesy The American Federation of Arts.



4. Goddess Vasudhara. Tenth century. Copper alloy. Approximately 16.75 x 13 x 9 centimetres. Private collection. Photo: courtesy The American Federation of Arts.

Tibetan sculpture in this show. An unusual thirteenth century "Priest's Crown" from Nepal; a sixteenth-century gilt copper "Head of Bhairava" (figure 2), the fierce form of Shiva unique to Nepalese culture, this mask-like sculpture is the most impressive metal example outside Nepal. A selection of rare Tibetan paintings, such as the *circa* 1500 "Mahakala and

Companions", one of the largest and most expressive *thankas* in the selection, is particularly noteworthy. Pages from sketchbooks and manuscripts, including "A Medico-Astrological Treatise" (figure 3) of 1600-1650 that details how to avoid demons attacking children, are another highlight.

The venue for this show's premiere, the Newark Museum, was most appropriate. The very first exhibition of Tibetan art was held here in 1911. Dr Albert L. Shelton, an American missionary who worked in the mission hospital in the Tibetan city of Batang, met Edward N. Crane, a trustee of the Newark Museum, aboard a ship on the Pacific. Dr Shelton's collection of Tibetan

art and ritual objects formed the nucleus of the Asian Art Collections at the Newark Museum. It has been unanimously felt that there could be nothing better than the same museum to commence the national tour of *Art of the Himalayas*.

What incidentally started in 1911 has probably proved to be one of the world's finest collections of Himalayan art at the Newark Museum. The collection of the Zimmermans demonstrates that a few Americans are astute in their admiration of Himalayan art and enjoy sharing their love for Nepalese and Tibetan art.

Preservation of Miniature Paintings

O. P. Agarwal

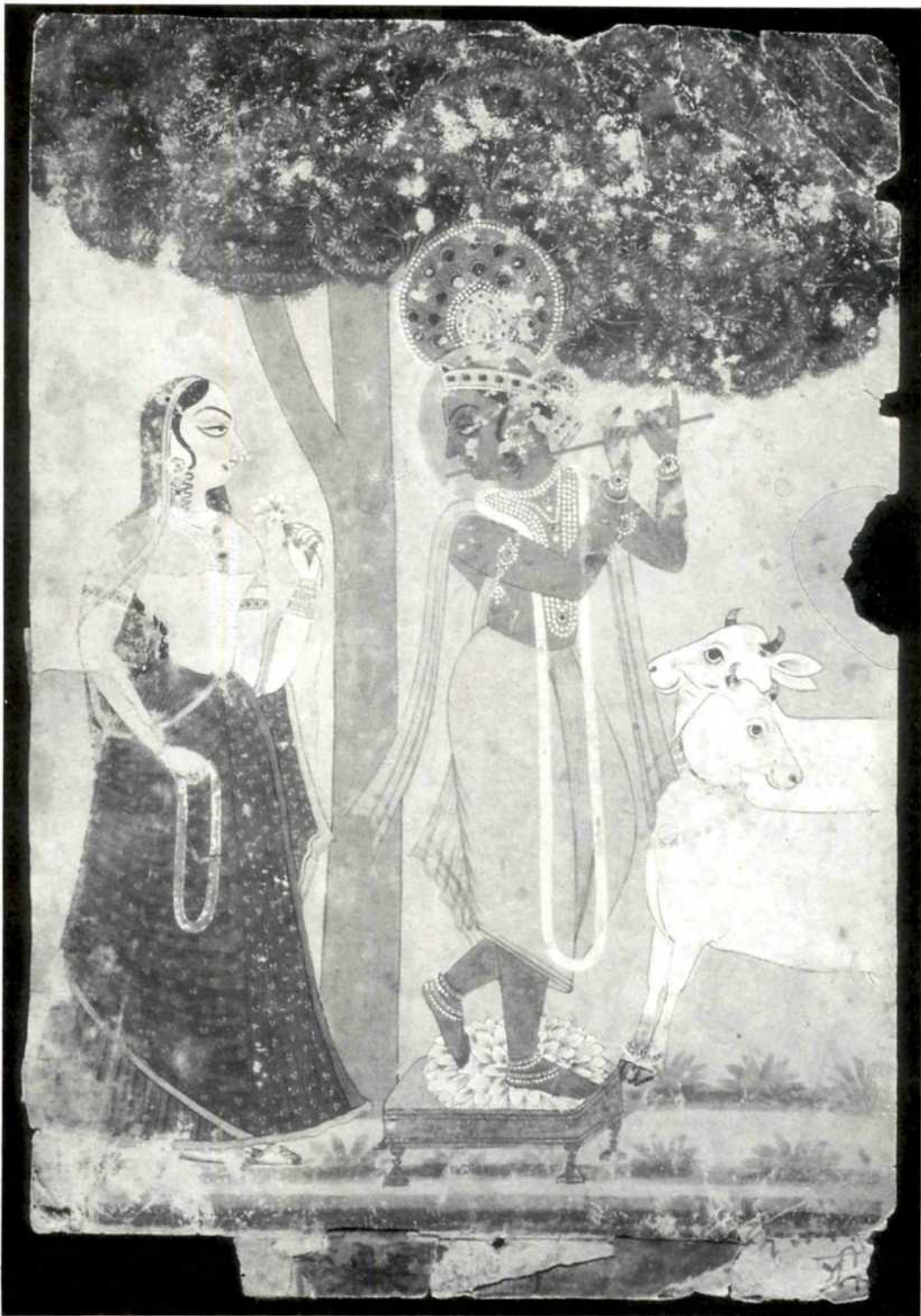
Paintings, particularly miniature paintings which are normally done on paper, are probably the most delicate of all art objects. Their constituents and fragile nature render them liable to be damaged easily by a mere touch or by the slightest shock, if one does not take due precautions.

In our laboratory, we receive paintings in various degrees of decay—some torn, some insect-eaten, some fungus-affected; in some cases there is flaking of paint.

The INTACH Indian Conservation Institute at Lucknow, sometime back received a miniature painting executed on paper and in a badly damaged condition, for treatment. The paper of the painting was very weak and brittle. It had turned yellow and brown in several places, so much so that the paper was completely lost in several places—resulting in gaps in the picture area. The paint was flaking and in some areas a black fungus grew. During the course of treatment these defects were rectified and the painting restored to its original glory. The flaking paint was “fixed back” to the paper support. A new window-cut mount board was also attached. The painting received a new lease of life. Yet, why should this type of deterioration have occurred in the first instance? If adequate precautions had been taken initially, such a situation could have been avoided.

This was not the only example of a deteriorated painting. Sometimes, strangely enough, paintings which have been earlier treated are also returned to the Institute for renewed treatment, the reason being the lack of careful maintenance.

Unlike other types of art a painting is rather complex. It has two layers—first, the material, such as a wall, paper, wooden panel, canvas, and other surfaces on which the painting is mounted and secondly, the paint itself. The paint is prepared by mixing the colour, that is the pigment, and a glue or gum or oil or resin as a binder. A miniature painting is generally done on paper, paper-board, or an ivory or wooden panel. To prepare the paint, glue or gum is mixed with pigments; sometimes vegetable dyes are also used. A painting will remain intact as long as the support of paper, cloth, or



1. A miniature painting on paper. The edges of this painting have been damaged on account of the brittleness of the paper.



2. A miniature painting on paper badly affected by fungus.

wood and the paint remain closely bound. If, for whatever reason, they happen to separate from one another, the painting suffers. All paintings must, therefore, be saved from the various agencies of deterioration.

Flaking of paint is a very common problem with miniature paintings. There may be several causes for this, but one is certainly variation in the climatic condition of the atmosphere in which the painting is kept. If the humidity is high, the board or paper on which the painting is done expands and when the humidity is low, for example, during the summer months, these materials contract. On the other hand, there is no change in the paint, so a stress is first of all created between the support and the paint. The result is cleavage and, finally, the flaking of the paint. It is thus necessary to save the paintings from climatic variations.

Full climatic control is not easy to maintain without proper air-conditioning. However, its effect can be minimized by taking various measures. One of them is framing a painting under glass. It has been observed that paintings kept in a frame with a glass or inside a showcase are less affected by climatic variations. Secondly, it is better that a painting is not brought out of an air-conditioned room too frequently. Any sudden change in climate has an adverse effect on the painting as well. It is for the same reason that a painting should not be placed near an open window, or too close to an air-conditioner or heater.

Many miniature paintings are destroyed on account of the effect of light. Intense lighting causes them to fade and weaken. A spot light or direct sunlight should not fall exactly on the paintings. Further, the duration of time of their exposure to light should be restricted to a minimum. Paintings have often been exposed to direct sunlight for the purpose of photography. This is a most dangerous practice even if for a brief period. Exposure to the sun brings not only light but heat also on the painting surface and is therefore extremely harmful, specially in the tropics. Miniature paintings and water-colours in particular lose their colour through over-exposure to light.



Another damaging factor to miniature paintings on paper is the growth of fungus. In moist climates fungi may grow on the paper or board, ultimately damaging the colour. The principal cause of fungus is high humidity. It should be ensured that a painting does not come in contact with water. If it accidentally comes in contact with water, or remains in touch with a moist wall, immediate action should be taken to dry it under a fan, preferably in the shade.

Sometimes moisture seeps from the wall into the back of a painting, particularly during the rainy season. It is a good practice to fix small wooden or plastic blocks of about three centimetres at the corners of the back

of the frame of the painting, so that it does not remain in direct contact with the wall, and allows free circulation of air between the wall and the frame. It is a desirable practice additionally to place a strip of anti-fungal paper such as a thymol paper at the back of the miniature painting.

Insects like silverfish, powder post beetles, cockroaches, and termites also harm paintings. Paintings should therefore be examined periodically to make sure that insects or fungi are not spoiling them. During the course of a regular examination, they should be cleaned with soft brushes. An insecticidal solution such as a one per cent solution of pentachlorophenol in rectified spirit could be applied on the

3. A miniature painting on paper that has been damaged by insects.

frame and on the cardboard behind the painting. It is important not to apply it directly on the painted surface, otherwise it would damage the paint.

Paintings can get damaged by frequent handling and transportation. They are easily abraded and should never be piled or stacked one on top of another without a soft cushion in between. A tissue paper should always be placed between miniature paintings or water-colours before piling them in bundles for storage.



4. A painting on paper before restoration.



5. The same painting after restoration.

Paper paintings should be placed between acid-free mount-board and glass, which has a window-cut so that the painting is seen. The mount-board serves the purpose of a spacer and prevents the painting from coming in direct contact with the glass. So, due to excess humidity, the painting is stuck to the glass and then it is difficult to separate the two. Therefore, there should be a spacer between the painting and the glass to avoid such an eventuality.

A paper painting should never be touched, even slightly, otherwise the paint will flake off. The paint is never fixed securely in a miniature painting, liable to fall off with the slightest vibration. A paper painting may be stained very easily, so before touching the painting, hands must be washed thoroughly or clean cotton gloves should be worn.

It can thus be seen that preservation of paper miniature paintings can be ensured by proper precautions, such as humidity, proper light levels, and protection from fungi and insects. Then, if a fault occurs, an expert conservation laboratory should be consulted. Trying to conserve the painting oneself may damage the painting irretrievably.

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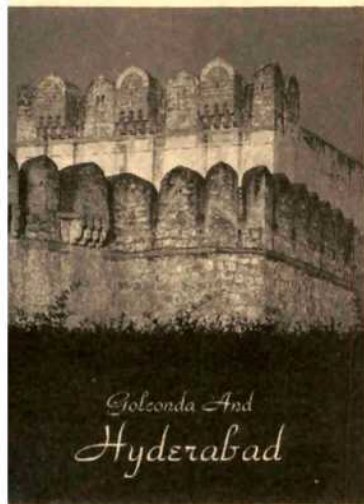
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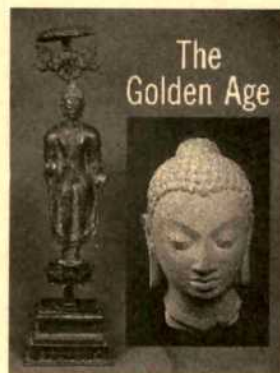
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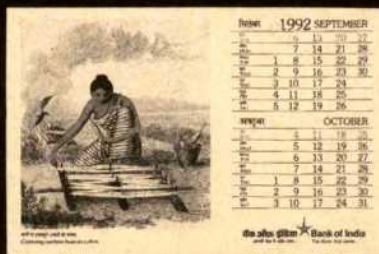
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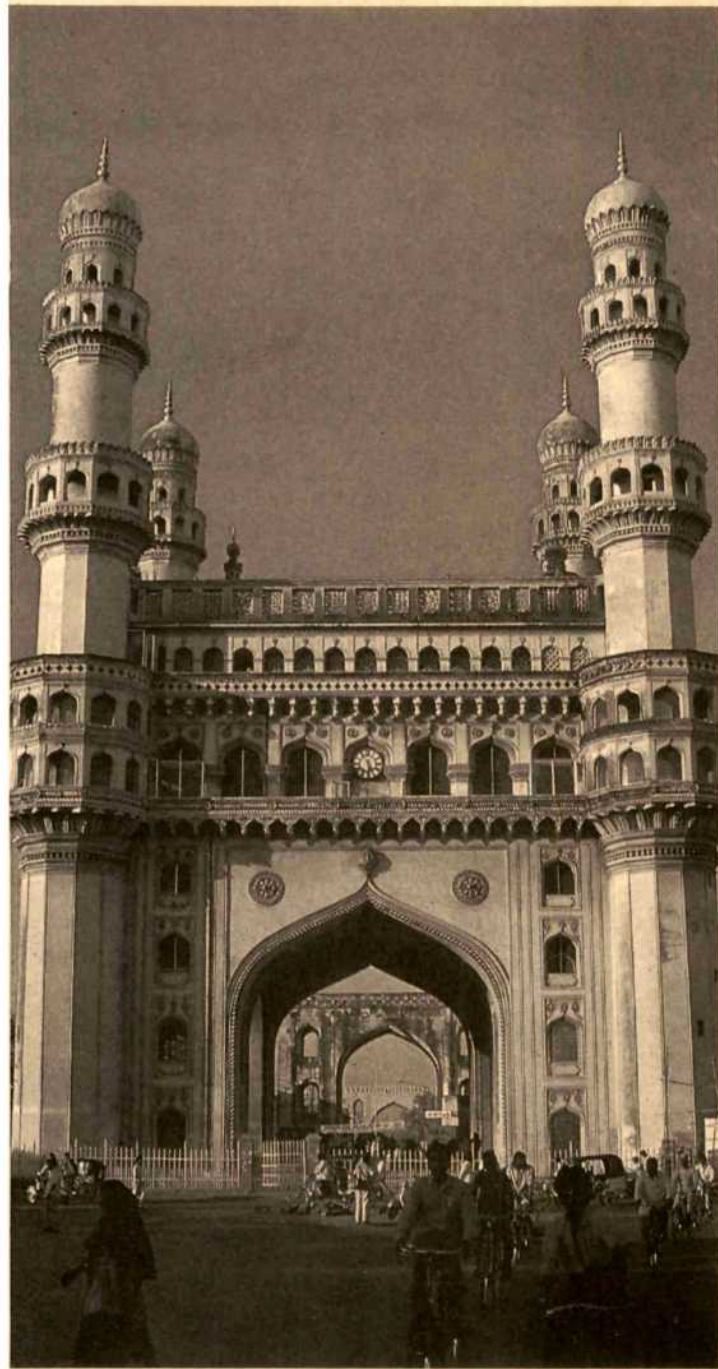
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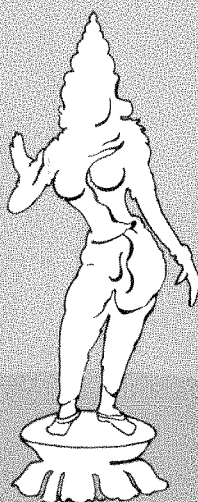
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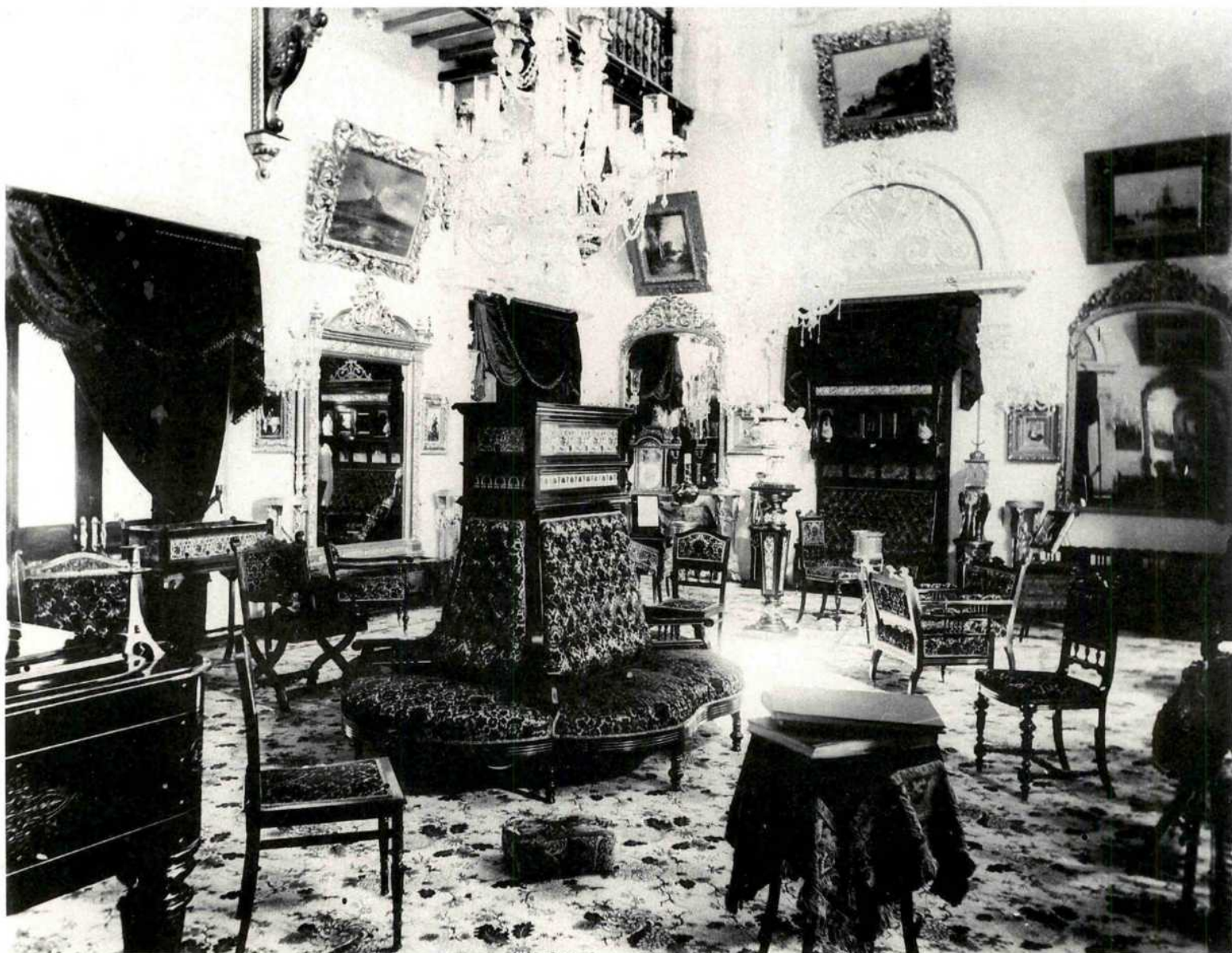
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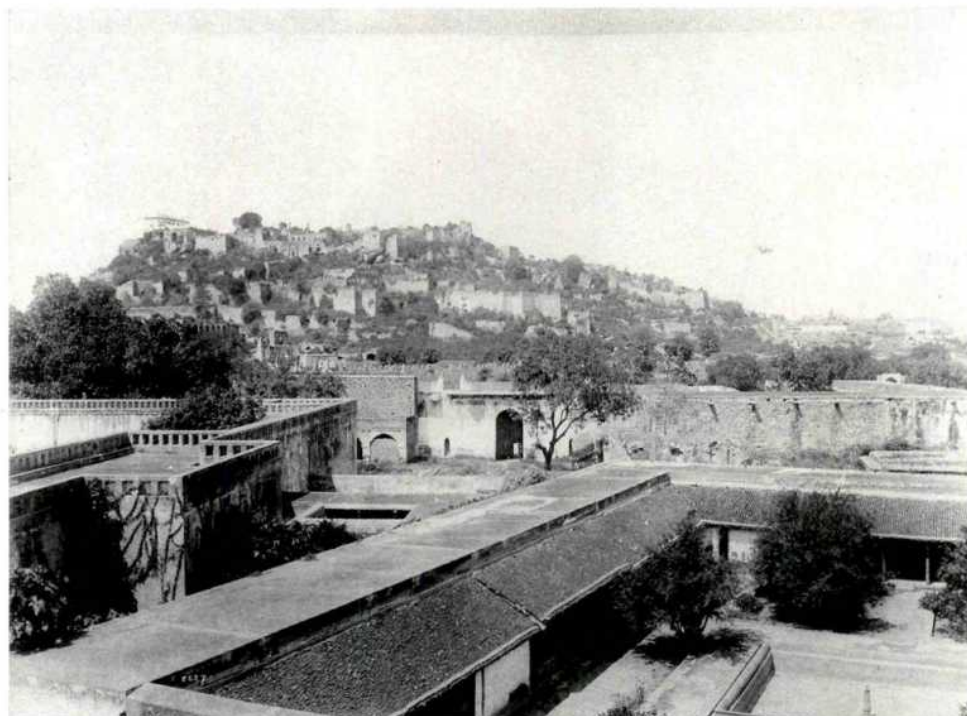
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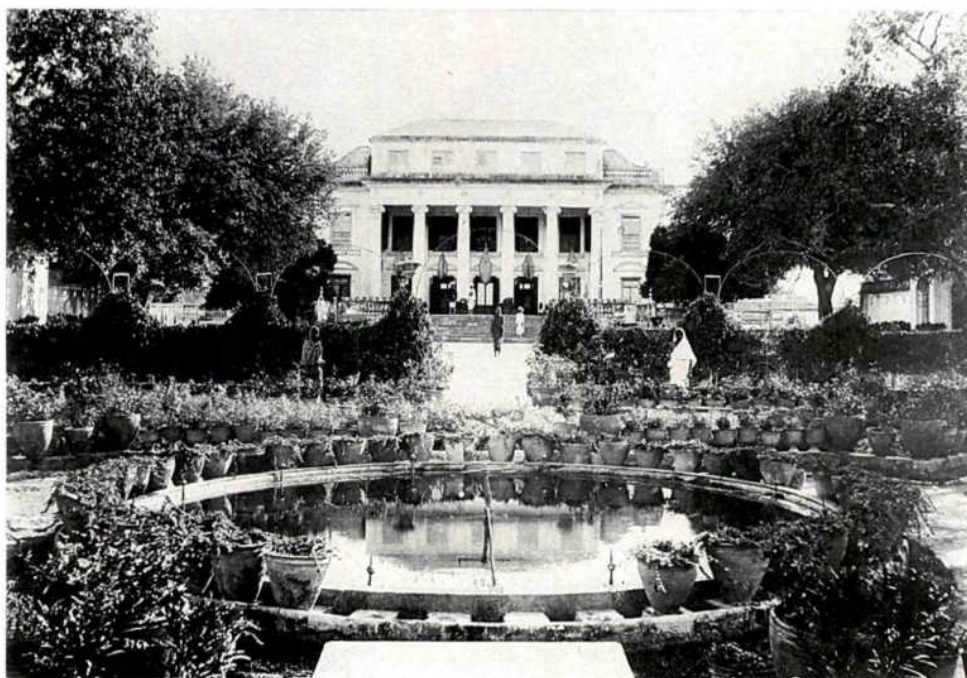


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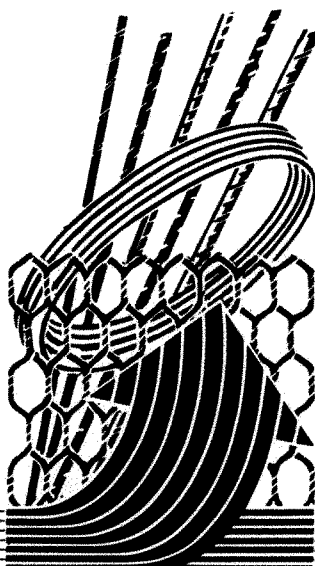
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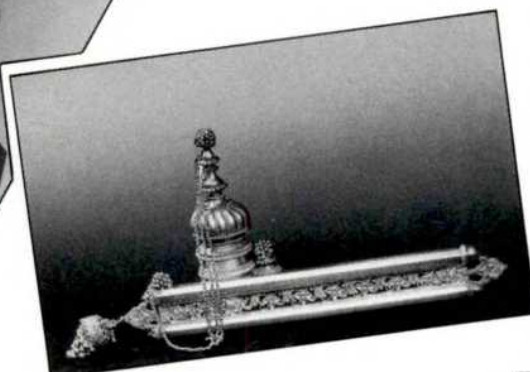
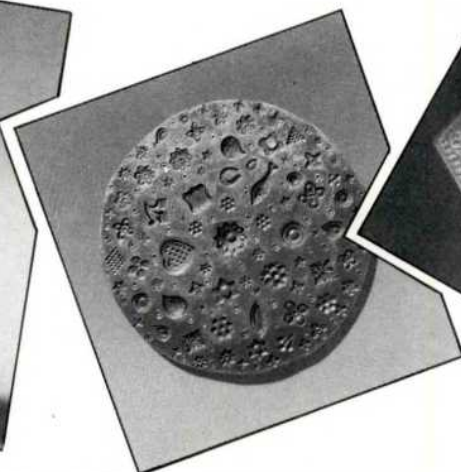
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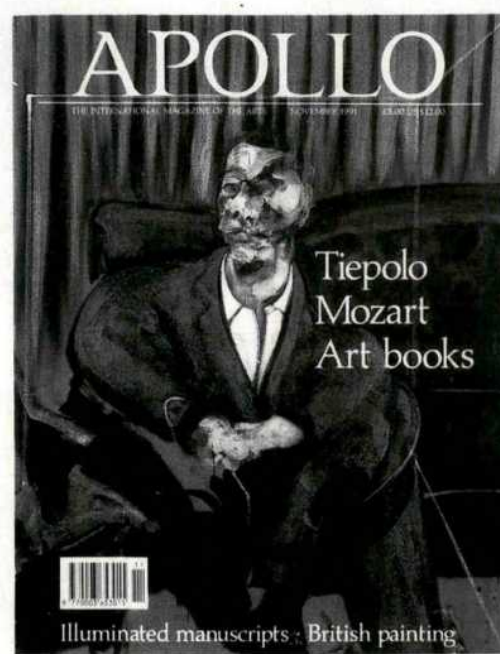
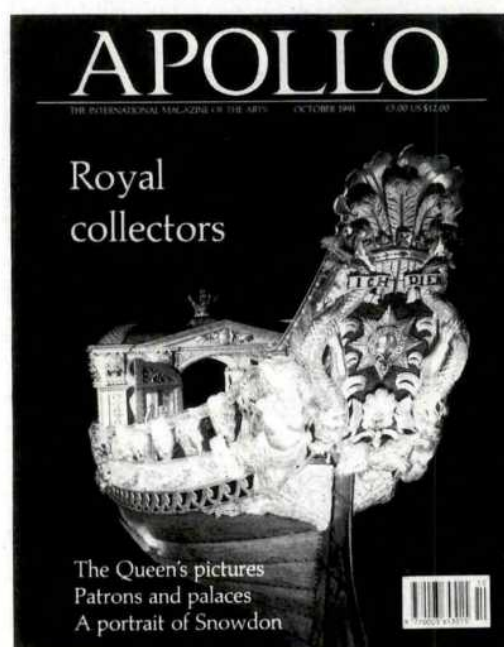
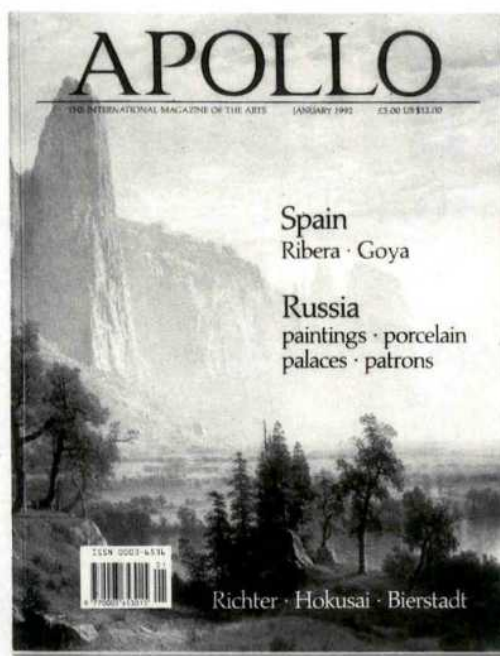
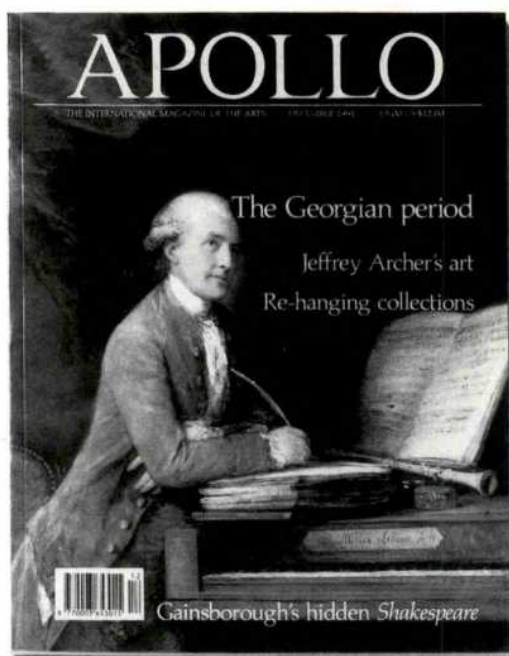
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The Kaiser Bagh Palace (City). Hyderabad. Albumen print. C. 1891.

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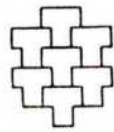


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*Bashirbagh Palace, Drawing Room. Hyderabad. Albumen print.
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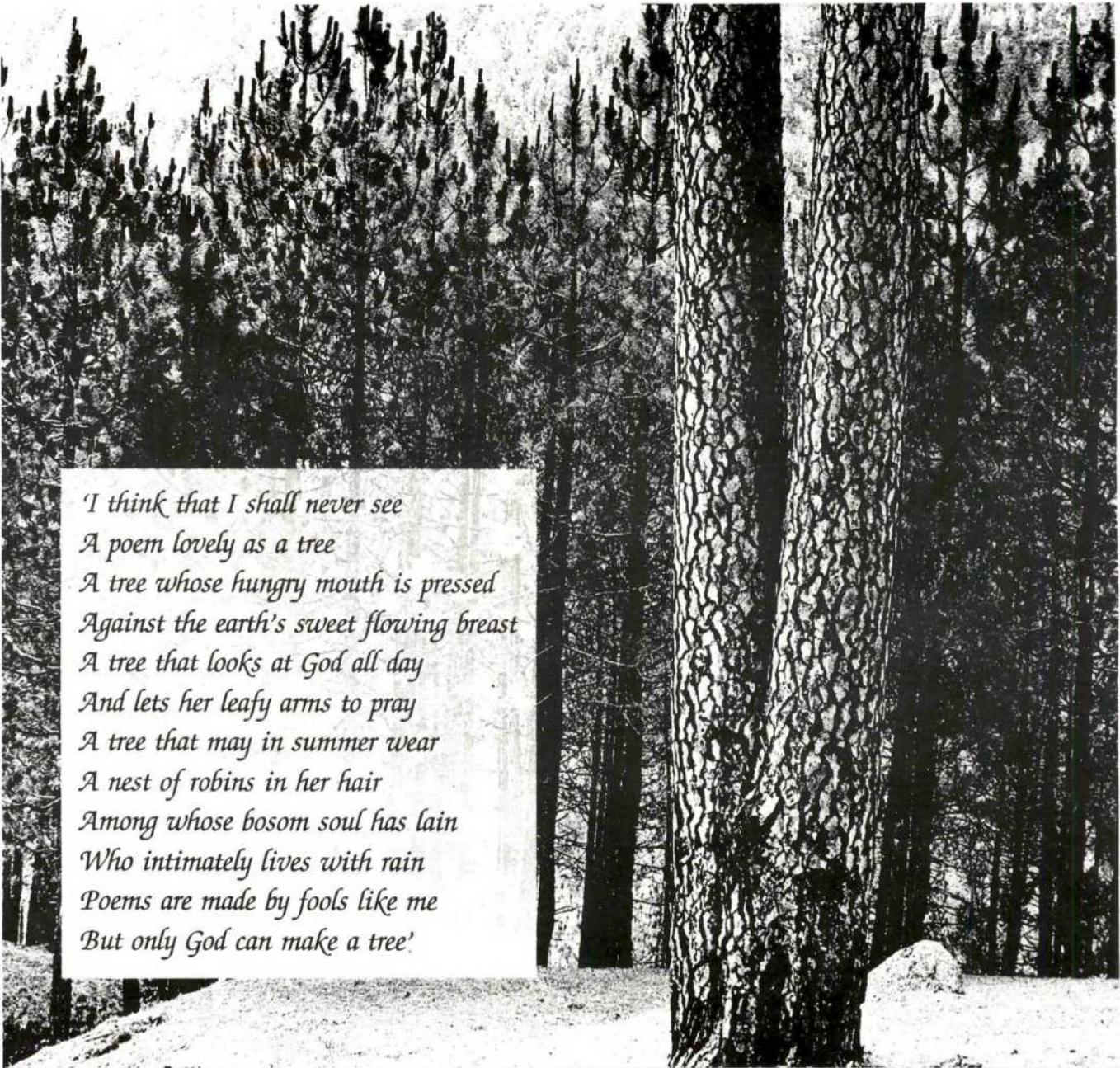


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Saroonagar Palace. Hyderabad. Albumen print. C. 1891. Photo: Raja Deen Dayal. Courtesy Phillips Antiques, Bombay.



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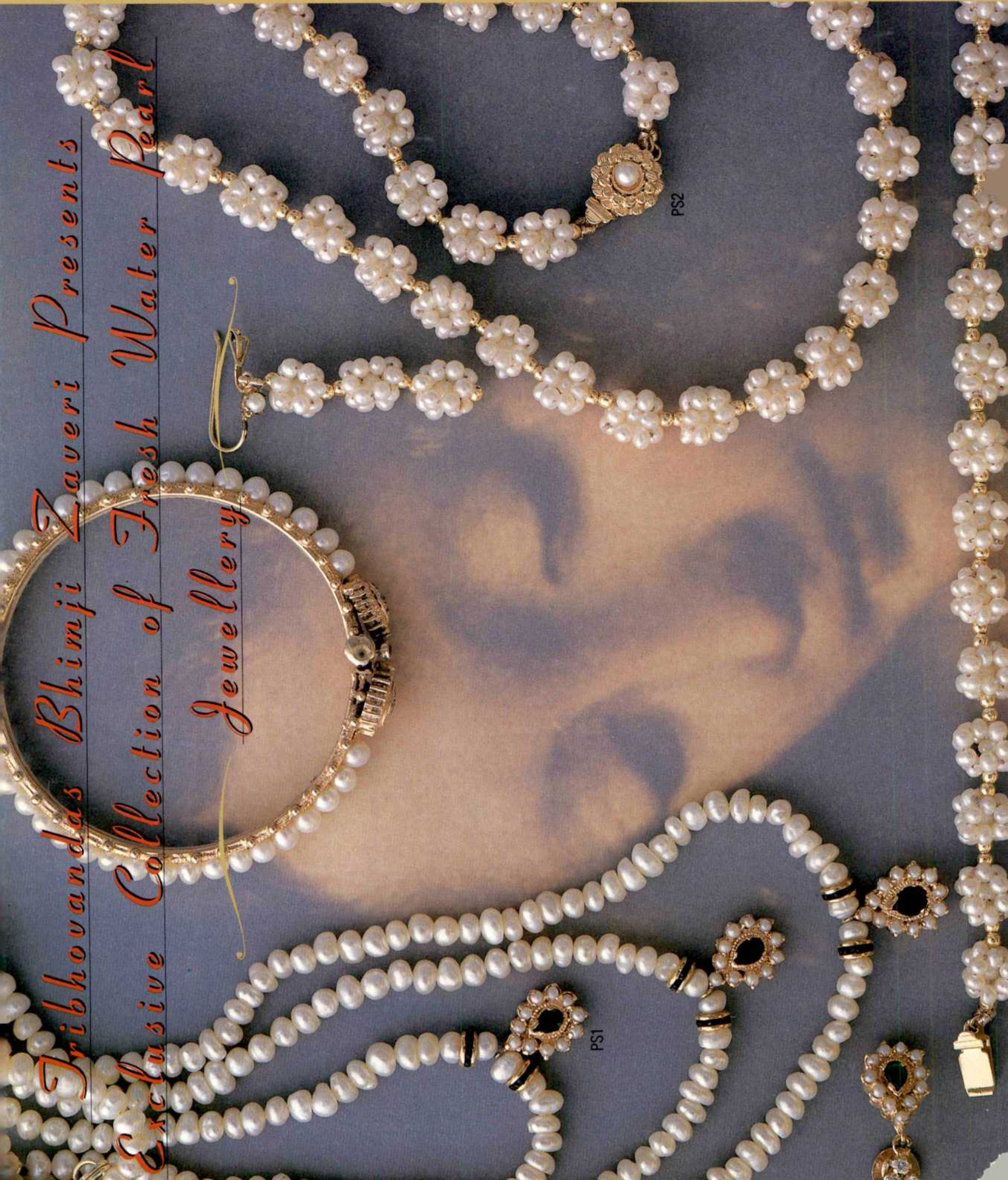
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Carved white jade cup. Ch'ien-lung (1736-1795). Height : 21.5 centimetres. Acc. no. 22.1326. Courtesy Tata Collection, Prince of Wales Museum of Western India, Bombay. Photograph : Ian Pereira.

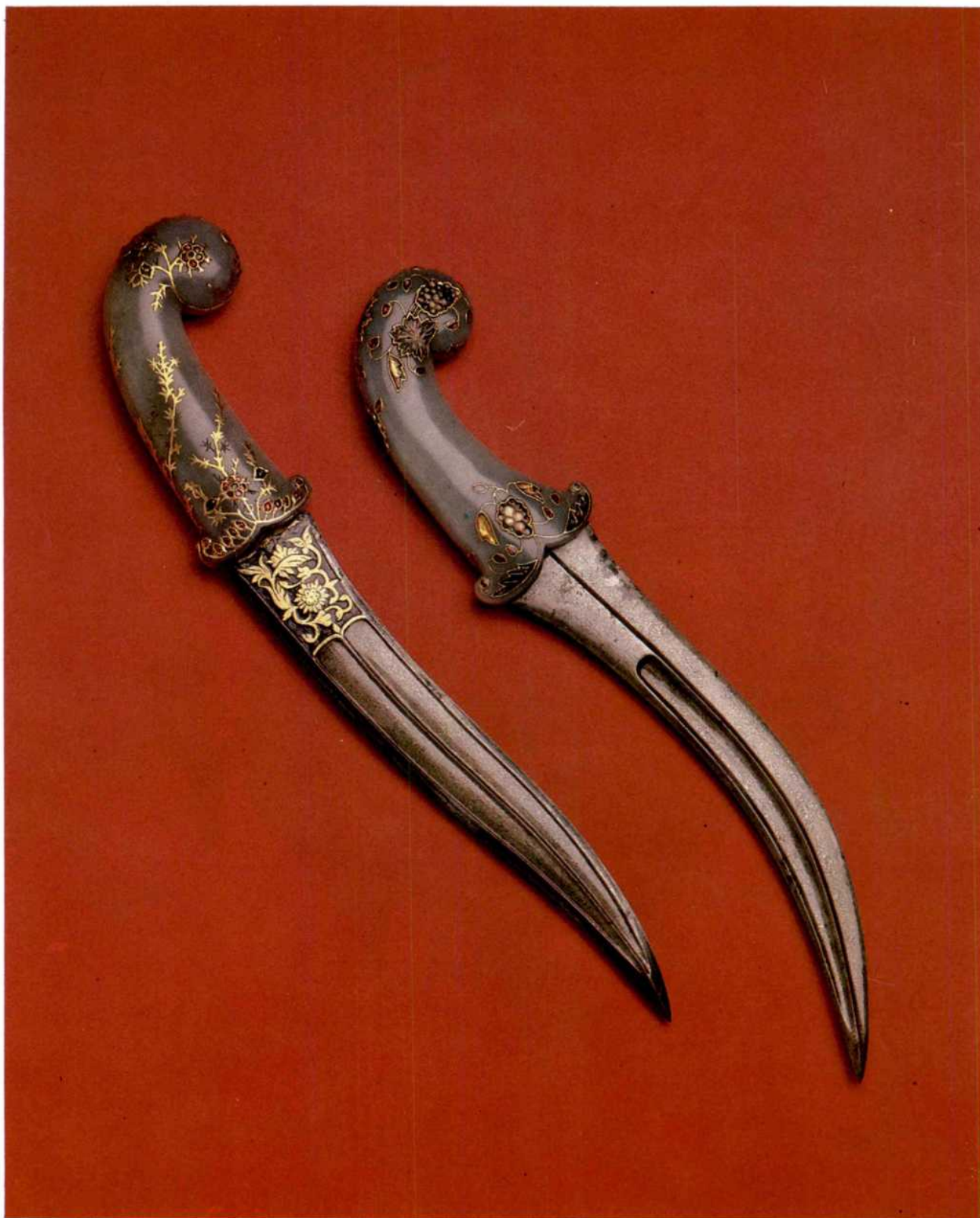


Dark green jade incense burner with cover. Pierced Ch'ien-lung handles with loose rings. Height: approx. 14 centimetres. Acc. no. 22.1266. Courtesy Tata Collection, Prince of Wales Museum of Western India, Bombay. Photograph: Ian Pereira.



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Daggers with jade handles encrusted with gold designs and inlaid with precious stones. Mughal work. Eighteenth century. L to r Acc. no. 22.3795, length: approx. 32 centimetres; Unnumbered, length: approx. 32 centimetres. Courtesy Tata Collection, Prince of Wales Museum of Western India, Bombay. Photograph: Ian Pereira.



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Mutton-fat jade incense burner. Ch'ien-lung (1736-1795). Height : 21 centimetres. Acc. no. 22.1333. Courtesy Tata Collection, Prince of Wales Museum of Western India, Bombay. Photograph : Ian Pereira.



White circular flower-shaped Indian jade dish fluted outside with two handles shaped like bent flower buds. The base has a curved leaf design. Seventeenth century. Height : 19 centimetres. Acc. no. 22.1329. Courtesy Tata Collection, Prince of Wales Museum of Western India, Bombay. Photograph : Ian Pereira.



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Dark green jade bowl with moss marking and scalloped rim. Fluted sides. The centre is carved like a lotus pod. Diameter : 21 centimetres. Acc. no. 22.1309. Courtesy Tata Collection, Prince of Wales Museum of Western India, Bombay. Photograph : Ian Pereira.

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Mutton-fat jade incense burner. Ch'ien-lung (1736-1795). Height : 20 centimetres (with stand). Acc. no. 22.1316.
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Jade vase. Nineteenth century. Height : 25 centimetres, width : 11.5 centimetres. Courtesy Tata Collection, Prince of Wales Museum of Western India, Bombay. Photograph : Ian Pereira.



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Polished mutton-fat jade vase with a carved cover. Height : 11 centimetres (with stand). Acc. no. 22.1319.
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The Art of Jade

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Cover: Detail of Base of Bowl. North India, Mughal. C. 1640-1650. Spinach green nephrite; 5.7 x 15.9 centimetres. Los Angeles County Museum of Art, From the Nasli and Alice Heeramaneck Collection, Museum Associates Purchase, M. 76.2.2. Photograph: courtesy LACMA (Steve Oliver). The ultra-smooth finish and sophisticated craftsmanship of this vessel typify Mughal jade working at its finest. This dramatic view shows the translucency and modelling of the delicately worked jade.

Preface

The literature on jade is enormous. In fact, one could say that there have been almost as many books and articles written about jade as there have been works of jade fashioned. This is especially apropos for China, where essays and poems on jade have been composed for millennia. More recently, however, special notice must be made of Roger Keverne's major publication, *Jade* (London: Anness Pub., 1991).

The Art of Jade presents a fresh survey of the treasured mineral's art-forms by academic and museum specialists who have previously worked on jades in their own geo-cultural field of study. This volume, with illustrated chapters, covers Chinese, Islamic, and Indian jades.

The editor wishes to thank the following individuals and institutions: Thomas Lentz and June Li for generously sharing their expertise, the Indo-U.S. Subcommission on Education and Culture for supporting an extensive research tour of Mughal jade collections in India, the Andrew W. Mellon Foundation for a similar tour in Scandinavia and northern Europe, Steve Oliver for his continual high quality photography, the many gracious museums and collectors for allowing the reproduction of their works of art, the staff of Marg Publications for their customary efficient work, and the distinguished writers themselves for their outstanding contributions.

Variations in spelling and dates are due to the preferences of individual contributors.

Introduction

Stephen Markel



Refined of manufacture, it is better (even) than a painting; though large of body, to grasp it is like (grasping) nothing.

— Imperial Chinese inscription on an Indian jade bowl.¹

To the great connoisseur of both Chinese and Indian jades, the Chinese Emperor Qianlong (r. 1736-1795), the extraordinarily accomplished jade decorative objects of Mughal India commanded admiration and superlatives. So impressed was the emperor with Mughal jades that he even regarded them superior in craftsmanship to contemporary Chinese jades.² Coming from the chief exponent of a civilization that had worked and revered jade for over seven thousand years, and one in which the art of painting had attained aesthetic and theoretical eminence rivalling any in world culture, for the Chinese emperor to prize Mughal jades over his own country's jades and painting is high praise indeed!

While jade is pre-eminently associated with the artistic genius of China (figure 1), two other Eastern cultures also developed strong traditions of jade working: the Islamic world of the Near East, wherein a wide range of stunning jade artefacts was produced under the Timurid, Ottoman (figure 2), and Safavid dynasties, and India whose Mughal artists created innumerable masterpieces of jade (figure 3). Accordingly, the essays in this magazine discuss jades in these specific regions and periods, although these are by no means the only geo-cultural traditions of jade working.

DIVERSITY AND ESTEEM OF JADE WORKING

As an artistic medium, jade is unparalleled in its versatility and expressive qualities. A wide range of ritual implements, sculptures, jewellery, and luxury items has been fashioned out of the prized mineral(s) for centuries throughout the world. Moreover, jade has long been accorded great symbolic and material worth. For instance, the Chinese ascribed to it numerous philosophical qualities:

The beauty of jade is revealed in its five virtues: its lustre produces a feeling of warmth — the virtue of humaneness; its translucence enables one to comprehend its inner markings, revealing the virtue of morality; its tone when struck reverberates, and its purity penetrates far, which is the virtue of courage; sharp and austere, it injures no one, which demonstrates its purity.

— *Shuo-wen chieh-tzu*, circa 100 BC.³

All of the cultures in which jade was worked have considered it an extremely prized commodity. Jade was valued more than gold in China and may have achieved its most lucrative relative worth under the aegis of the Aztecs. When in 1519 the great Aztec emperor, Montezuma II (r. 1502-1520), offered tributary jades to the Spanish conqueror of Mexico, Hernán Cortés (1485-1547), he explained, "I will give you some very valuable stones, which you will send to him (Charles V) in my name; they are *chalchibuitls* [jades].... Each stone is worth two loads of gold."⁴



1. Pair of Bowls. China, Qing Dynasty. Late eighteenth-nineteenth century. White nephrite jade, wooden stand; height: 6 centimetres, diameter: 12.3 centimetres. Los Angeles County Museum of Art, Gift of Isadore Familian, M. 85.276. 4a,b. Photograph: courtesy LACMA (Steve Oliver). This pair of Mughal-style bowls exemplifies the influence of Indian jades upon Qing ones, especially in the extreme thinness of the walls and the use of Mughalesque plant motifs. The Chinese origin of the vessels is revealed by the shape of the bowls and the presence of the flying celestial figures.

2. Begging Bowl (*kashkul*). Turkey, Ottoman. Late seventeenth-early eighteenth century. Dark green nephrite with black magnetite inclusions; length: 19.5 centimetres. Edwin Binney, 3rd, Turkish Collection, Los Angeles County Museum of Art, TR. 7968.108. Photograph: courtesy LACMA (Steve Oliver). Begging bowls began to be fashioned in this form as early as the twelfth century and continued to be produced through the Timurid, Safavid, and Ottoman periods. More commonly made of metal or ceramic ware, this is a rare jade example.



3. Mouthpiece (*mukbna*) for a Water-pipe. North India, Mughal. C. 1675-1700. White nephrite jade inlaid with diamonds, rubies, and emeralds set in gold; 9.9 x 5.1 centimetres. Los Angeles County Museum of Art, From the Nasli and Alice Heeramaneck Collection, Museum Associates Purchase, M. 76.2.10. Photograph: courtesy LACMA (Steve Oliver). Mughal nobles preferred to use their own mouthpiece when smoking from a communal water-pipe. Made from a single piece of jade, this ornate example typifies the lavish gem stone inlay and floral imagery of the Mughals.

HISTORICAL AND TECHNICAL ASPECTS OF JADE

Despite jade's myriad artistic and symbolic expressions and its immense temporal and geo-cultural diversity, there are inherent technical aspects common to all jade working traditions. Before discussing these, however, it is necessary to review certain historical and mineralogical distinctions involving jade. The English word "jade" comes from the Spanish *piedra de bijada* (stone of the loins). An alternative term, *piedra de riñones* (stone of the kidneys), gave rise to our word "nephrite" from the Greek *nephros* and the Latin *nephriticus*, both referring to "kidney". The two Spanish terms allude to the supposed curative powers that jade was believed to have for ailments of the kidneys among the peoples of Meso-America, who introduced the Spanish Conquistadors in the sixteenth century to talismans and ornaments made of the stone.

In modern technical usage, the term "jade" refers to two distinct minerals: nephrite and jadeite. Commercial usage also includes a number of simulants under the jade umbrella. Nephrite jade encompasses a mineral series formed of a silicate of calcium and magnesium, often with iron or other trace elements that give the stone various hues or striations. It has a hardness factor of 6.0 to 6.5 on the Mohs' Scale, which indicates that it is moderately hard compared to a diamond (10 on the scale). Structurally, nephrite is composed of long, interwoven fibrous crystals, which provide great resistance to breakage and render carving in traditional stone-working methods impossible.

In contrast, jadeite is a silicate of sodium and aluminium. It has an index factor of 6.5 to 7.0 on the Mohs' Scale, which is slightly harder than nephrite but just under rock crystal. Jadeite also differs from nephrite in structure, as it consists of interlocking granular crystals rather than felted fibres. Both nephrite and jadeite come in a variety of colours, with the hues of the latter generally being regarded as more vivid. The polished surfaces of the two minerals also vary — jadeite is slightly glassy while nephrite has a somewhat waxy feel.

Numerous jade simulants have been used for centuries by both artisans and unscrupulous dealers. At least thirty simulants are known, with the most common being aventurine, quartz, beryl, jasper, and several types of serpentine (figure 4), especially bowenite. Simulants are known by different generic terms in various academic fields of study relating to jade. The primary terms are social jade, cultural jade, and simply, greenstones.

Despite their superficial visual similarity to nephrite and jadeite, simulants can be easily distinguished from the two minerals by analytical laboratory tests such as refractive index readings or X-ray diffraction. Although experienced connoisseurs can acquire a "feel" for nephrite or jadeite based on certain physical features, such as surface lustre or texture, for most casual beholders and buyers prudence demands scientific circumspection rather than mere visual inspection.

TECHNIQUES OF JADE WORKING

A technical corollary of the extreme hardness and interlocked molecular structure of jades is that it is impossible to be carved or cleaved along fraction lines.⁵ Thus, the terms "jade carving" or "carved jades" are misnomers, for virtually all worked nephrite and jadeite artefacts are, by necessity, abraded and polished. Conversely, many jade simulants are softer and may be carved with chisels or other implements.

Traditionally, raw jade is cut or sawed into blocks by various manual means, all equally laborious. Unlike modern metal saws, ancient saws were primarily fashioned from sharpened rocks or made in the form of a bow or string saw. Grinding and drilling were also common methods of working jade and were frequently used in conjunction with sawing. Drill points were made of metal, stone, bone, or other hardstones. Regardless of the type of saw, grinder, or drill, the extreme hardness of jade demanded the use of an abrasive substance such as quartz sand, diamond particles, or other hard abrasives.

After the initial cutting and subsequent shaping to the required decorative form was completed, the next step involved polishing the jade to the desired smoothness and sheen. Various wooden, stone, or leather surfaces were used with abrasives to polish the jade. Post-production methods of ornamentation include occasionally heating or staining the jade to produce different hues and the inlaying of various precious metals



4. Koran Stand. Pakistan, Panjab, Bhera. Late Mughal. C. 1800. Light green lizardite serpentine, steel frame inlaid with gold; 42.2 x 17.1 centimetres. Los Angeles County Museum of Art, The Nasli M. Heeramaneck Collection, Gift of Joan Palevsky, M. 73.5.118. Photograph: courtesy LACMA (Steve Oliver). Made of a much softer jade simulant in place of the harder and more typical nephrite that was used for most Mughal jades, this bookstand has a virtually identical companion in the Indian Museum, Calcutta, which is recorded as having been acquired from Bhera, near Lahore in Pakistan.

and gem stones. These techniques of working jade were, with certain regional variations, used by traditional jade artists around the world to create innumerable lapidary wonders.

CONCLUSION

Although virtually all the jades illustrated in this magazine predate the twentieth century, there continues to be a thriving tradition of jade working around the world that serves both artistic and tourist needs. Given the inherent beauty and enduring nature of jades, it is easy to concur with the sentiment engraved on an eighteenth-century Mughal jade bowl presented to the Emperor Qianlong: "To be eternally treasured by generations to come."⁶

NOTES

1. Teng Shu-ping, *Catalogue of a Special Exhibition of Hindustan Jade in the National Palace Museum*, trans. David M. Kamen, exh. cat. (Taipei: National Palace Museum, 1983), p. 91.
2. Teng, *Hindustan Jade*, pp. 84-85, 90-91.
3. Hsu Shen, ed. (Peking: Chung-hua shu-chu, 1963), p. 10, quoted in Richard E. Strassberg, "Introduction," in Suzanne Haney Foster, *Chinese Jade: The Image from Within* (Pasadena: Pacific Asia Museum, 1986), p. 11.
4. Quoted by André Emmerich, Foreword to Elizabeth Kennedy Easby, *Pre-Columbian Jade from Costa Rica* (New York: André Emmerich Inc., 1968), p. 8. Charles V was the Holy Roman Emperor (1519-1556) and, as Charles I, the King of Spain (1516-1556).
5. When art historians hypothesize that Mughal artists were capable of working jade because Indians had carved rock crystal for centuries, the differences in techniques necessitated by the differences in mineralogical structure between the stones render this assumption invalid. See Moti Chandra, "The Art of Cutting Hardstone Ware in Ancient and Modern India," *Journal of the Gujarat Research Society*, 1:4 (1939), pp. 71-85.
6. Teng, *Hindustan Jade*, p. 162.

Early Chinese Jades

Robert E. Fisher

THE study of jade should properly begin with its earliest and ultimately its most extensive application, the Chinese tradition. No other culture has patronized such a specialized or difficult art-form for a continuous period of over seven thousand years, or given more literary and philosophical attention to a single material. Moral virtue, aesthetic purity, and eternal life are but some of the numerous claims made by the Chinese for this most precious of stones.

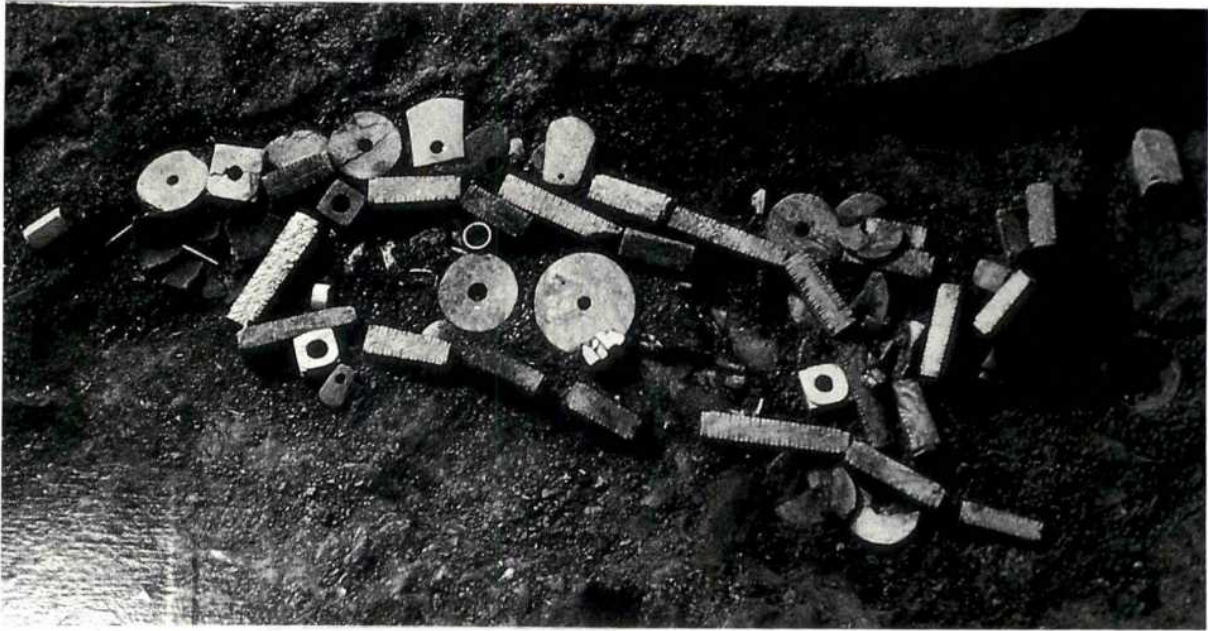
The Chinese fascination with jade is remarkable also for jade's hardness—it could be worn away but not actually cut with tools—making it extremely difficult and time-consuming to shape. Given that intractable quality, it is all the more remarkable to consider the sheer thousands of jade objects, most created for ritual use in earliest times and shifting to more purely aesthetic concerns during the past millennium, which indicates the importance jade has continued to hold throughout Chinese history. Far more workable materials were available, yet the Chinese chose this unrelenting substance for many of their most important works of art. Its distinguished position in the world's oldest culture cannot, indeed, be overestimated.



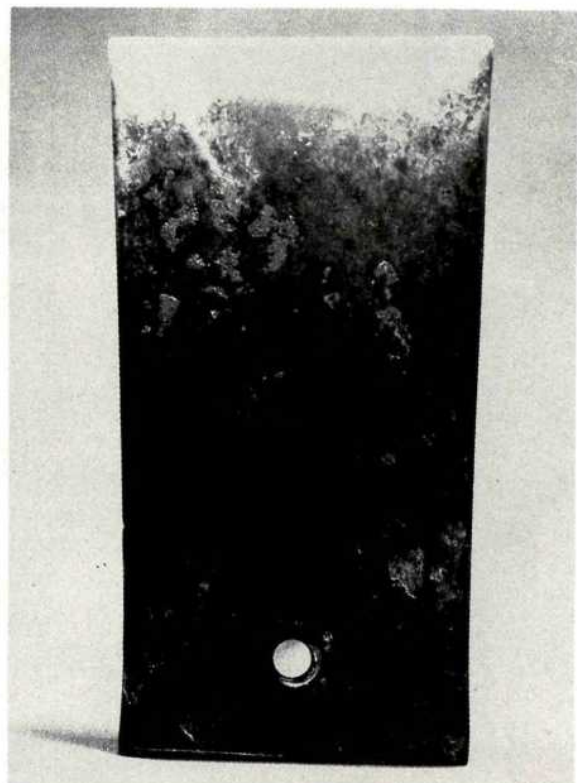
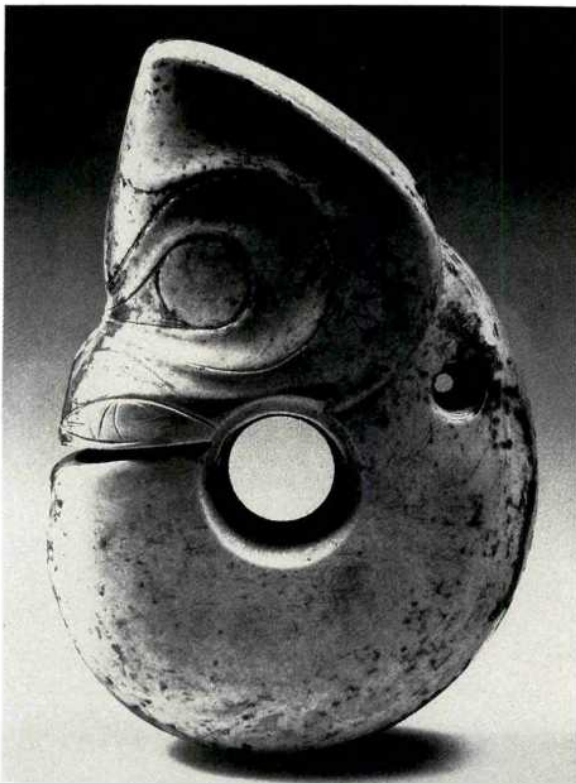
1. Jade Cong from Sidun, Jiangsu, Neolithic, Liangzhu culture. After *Zhongguo meishu quanji* (The Great Treasury of Chinese Art), vol. 9 (Jades), plate 41.

Our knowledge of the earliest use of Chinese jade has been greatly enhanced through archaeological discoveries of the past twenty years. Until then there had been a general belief that the first use of jade was early in the second millennium BC, and that nearly all early jade had been imported from Central Asia, but recent excavations revealed neither to be correct. In fact, Chinese archaeologists discovered the working of jade early in the neolithic period, certainly by 5000 BC, more likely even earlier, and the source for much of the jade to be the area of east and north-eastern China, not only distant Khotan, as long assumed. Some Chinese scholars now believe Central Asian or Khotanese nephrite was not imported until historical times around 2000 BC.

Along with these revelations have come new interpretations of many shapes and forms. For centuries accepted explanations about the meanings and purposes of early



2. Neolithic Jades from a Burial at Sidun. Jiangsu, Liangzhu culture. Jiangsu Provincial Museum. Photograph: Robert E. Fisher.



3. Jade Zhulong or "Pig-Dragon" from Liaoning. Neolithic, Hongshan culture. After *Zhongguo meishu quanji* (The Great Treasury of Chinese Art), vol. 9 (Jades), plate 12.

4. Jade Chan. Neolithic, late Dawenkou culture, Shandong. After *Zhongguo meishu quanji* (The Great Treasury of Chinese Art), vol. 9 (Jades), plate 16.

jades had been based on ancient texts, some thought to date from before the time of Confucius (sixth to fifth century BC) but following the recent archaeological discoveries, these texts have proved incomplete, with information added later through imaginative assumptions and additions. The *Zhou Li* or Ritual of the Zhou, compiled near the end of the Zhou dynasty, described the ceremonial purposes of the various jade forms. Unfortunately, by that time most of those rites were no longer being observed and the writers of the texts simply composed their own, often fanciful explanations.

The Chinese veneration of ancient textual sources ensured the acceptance of those descriptions well into modern times. Archaeologists have gradually removed many of those fictional descriptions and are providing a more sound basis for understanding many of the complex forms of the early jades. So extensive and widely accepted had been this large corpus of literary "knowledge" about ancient Chinese jade that the discoveries and analyses of the past two decades have made the re-evaluation of Chinese jade one of the most dynamic areas of Asian art history.

THE EARLIEST CHINESE JADE

Recent excavations have verified the working of jade in eastern China's Zhejiang province from at least 5000 BC, and this neolithic phase of working on jade was also found in other areas until the invention of writing, the use of bronze tools, and the first semblance of dynastic development, about 4000 years ago, as discovered at the Xia levels at Erlitou.¹ Many of these neolithic jades are notable for their intriguing forms, the result of the religious or shamanistic practices they served. Among the most prominent subjects were those created in anthropomorphic and zoomorphic forms, abstract and geometric shapes or as copies of weapons, such as daggers (figures 1-4), with many smaller ones used as pendants and bangles. All types were found in burials (often in considerable numbers), indicating that they were primarily ceremonial. The favourite decorative motif was that of the bird,² including some jades inscribed with tiny birds atop emblematic forms, similar to Egyptian cartouches. These profiles of birds and symbols are akin to early Chinese pictographs, but precede the development of writing by centuries.

Even if some are considered ornaments, such as smaller *bi* disks and various pendants, the great size and weight of many others eliminate possible consideration as mere decorative objects. As Wu Hung has pointed out, the labour and time required to produce these objects indicate a social organization and hierarchy of considerable wealth and complexity, a fundamental aspect of Chinese culture that remained throughout its history.

The *cong* (figure 1), along with the circular *bi* disk, is one of the most familiar of ancient jade shapes, yet its exact ritual meaning continues to elude art historians. Excavated only in burial contexts and only with males, with more than twenty-five found about a single body (figure 2), these hollow, usually square tubes of varying height, indicate the high esteem the form held for neolithic peoples. However, it is the incised faces that endow many with their unique, haunting quality. These bifurcated, humanoid masks are both cut through the surface as well as rendered in low relief. The effect of this repeated, arresting face, neither friendly nor inviting, but rather terrifying with its large, circular eyes and rectangular mouth, projects an awesome ritual presence seldom matched among neolithic imagery of any culture. A comparison with the well-known *taotie* "masks" of Shang ritual bronzes (which may derive, in part, from such neolithic jade motifs) makes the latter appear as little more than decoration against this impersonal, intimidating image that embodies something of the ominous portent of the burial ritual and the essence of deities of superhuman powers.

Some sense of the sophisticated range of emblems and symbolism of neolithic Chinese cultures can be seen in the *zhulong* or "pig-dragon" (figure 3) and *chan* or dagger blade (figure 4). These images suggest the importance of animals and mythology along with the attendant shamanistic ritual practices that must accompany the proper rites needed to maintain the rhythmic, seasonal process of an agrarian society. The dragon remains one of China's best-known cosmic emblems and literary sources attest the neolithic origins of the important role the animal plays in Chinese culture. It is worth noting that the *zhulong* shape was found more than a thousand kilometres inland from

the coastal Zhejiang region, indicating the wide geographic range of jade production. So great was this area that recent excavations have discovered regional schools of jade production, distinctive in subjects, styles, and techniques. The history of Chinese neolithic jade is only beginning to be understood and names such as Liangzhu, Hongshan, and Dawenkou have now been added to the vocabulary of archaeologists and art historians.

THE EARLY HISTORICAL DYNASTIES: SHANG AND ZHOU, CIRCA 1700-221 BC

Along with the invention of writing, early in the second millennium BC, came a new epoch of great rulers, expanding kingdoms, and royal burials, with the casting of



5. Jade Figure from Yinxu Tomb No. 5. Late Shang. After *Zhongguo meishu quanji* (The Great Treasury of Chinese Art), vol. 9 (Jades), plate 64.

sophisticated bronze vessels, resulting in a pageant of power and grandeur. Jade was forced to share its pre-eminent position as the primary ceremonial material, notably with the ritual bronzes, designed for the court and used in burial. While the development of the ritual system was expanded (and jade continued to play a major role), the expanded demands influenced the direction and subjects of jade production. For example, more jades were made in imitation of ritual articles from other media and as copies of utilitarian objects, with little functional use, such as jade daggers, with these various replicas often intended as awards for loyalty to the ruler. Such imitations expanded the subject-matter of jade and also indicated a shift away from its earlier ceremonial role. It also contributed to diminished quality, as Forsyth has noted.³

By the end of this long period some of the technically finest jades in Chinese history were produced, albeit with a diminishing of the earlier emphasis upon ritual in favour of a greater appreciation of the inherent beauty of the stone itself. As the ritual importance of jade faded, it came to be seen more in terms of its intrinsic qualities, especially its combination of great beauty and hardness, coupled with a growing belief in its near mystical powers. This led eventually to a renewed use of jade in burial, but less as an important ceremonial object than as an actual preservative for the body. The shift from the use of jade in ritual to a more secular and even mystical role was well established by the end of the Zhou dynasty.

Among the most interesting jades of the Shang and Zhou dynasties are various human, animal, and mythical creatures, at times merged in totemistic fashion (figure 5). The kneeling human may represent a continuation of neolithic bird forms—here the rear protrusion has been identified as the tail of a bird, the totem of the Shang rulers, and similar to the bird pictographs found on contemporary ritual bronzes.⁴ Another image of a bird is this graceful, curved likeness, usually labelled a phoenix (figure 6), a study in rounded form, capturing the elegance of both the long-tailed mythical bird and the calligraphic stroke of the writer's brush. Seldom has a material the hardness of jade been



6. Jade Pendant in Shape of Plumed Bird. Tomb No. 5, Henan province, Anyang period (c. 1300-1030 BC). After *Zhongguo meishu quanji* (The Great Treasury of Chinese Art), vol. 9 (Jades), plate 68.

7. Jade Pendant in Form of a Knotted Dragon. Eastern Zhou dynasty. Fifth-third century BC. Height: 8 centimetres. Photograph: courtesy The Metropolitan Museum of Art.

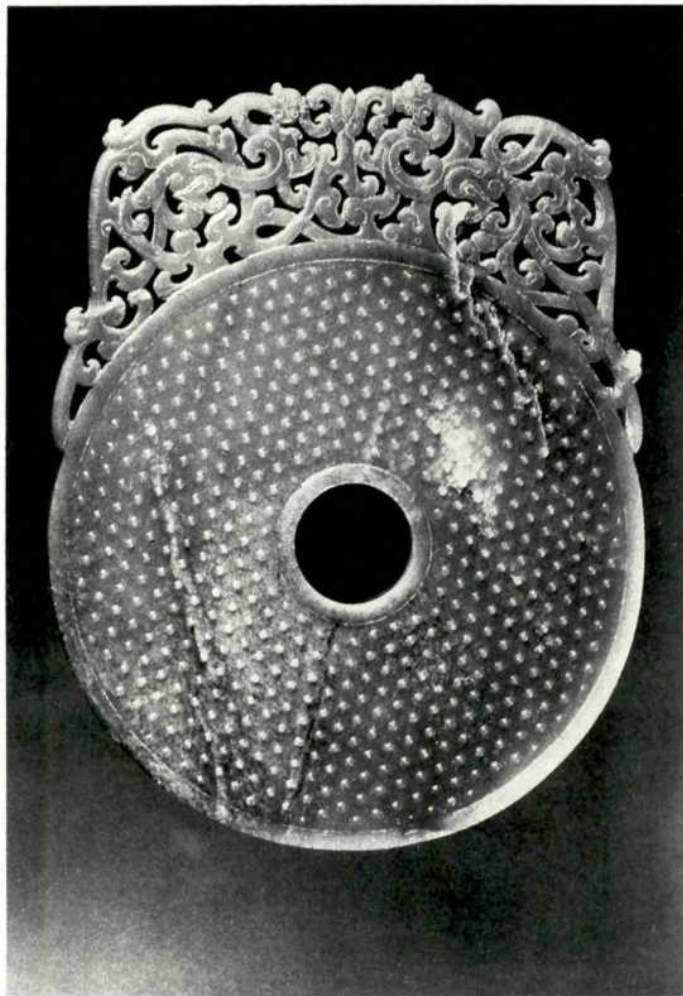
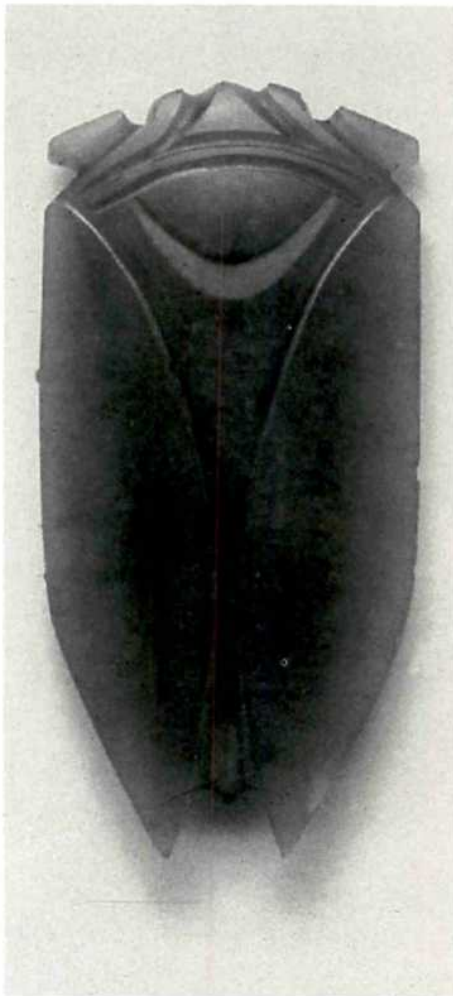


8. Jade Plaque. Late Zhou dynasty. After *Zhongguo meishu quanji* (The Great Treasury of Chinese Art), vol. 9 (Jades), plate 108.

as sensitively rendered in the curving forms associated with the grace of a bird and the sweep of the calligrapher's stroke.

Another *tour de force* of technical skill is a pendant formed into a dragon, its body neatly tied into a knot (figure 7). Whereas the earlier Shang phoenix is emphatically a two-dimensional form, this Eastern Zhou dragon is worked three-dimensionally with equal skill and even greater sensitivity to surface decoration. The two jades suggest the range of colours and the translucency of nephrite, both embodying the tonalities of colour so often prized by Chinese collectors, especially the darker, mottled browns that intrude into the creamy white stone.

Whatever the subject-matter of Shang and Zhou jades, the greatest skill was reserved for surface decoration. Raised lines, incised patterns, and relief decorations were utilized in creating some of the most sensuous surfaces in the history of art. The numerous curved pendants and dragons, so popular in the last centuries of the Zhou dynasty, are masterpieces of the mating of the finest nephrite and the skilled application of surface decoration. As the artists increased their sophistication in working jade, there also developed ever greater respect for the final product, an appreciation that bordered upon the mystical—so difficult was the task and astonishing the results! A jade plaque (figure 8) composed of a variety of surface techniques results in an unusual complex of patterns. The references to animal forms, such as the claws and toes in the centre or the stylized eyes, retain some of the traditional forms from neolithic and Shang periods, reminiscent of the *taotie* mask, yet animate the design beyond mere decoration. Indeed, this small plaque has a power akin to large Aztec stone reliefs, with much of the same raw energy embedded within the writhing, organic forms. In both the Aztec and Zhou examples, the image is initially dominated by surface decoration but is revealed, ultimately, as brutally powerful in its mass of compressed forms.



9. Jade Cicada Carved on Both Sides. Han dynasty. Photograph: courtesy W. P. Chung collection, Hong Kong.

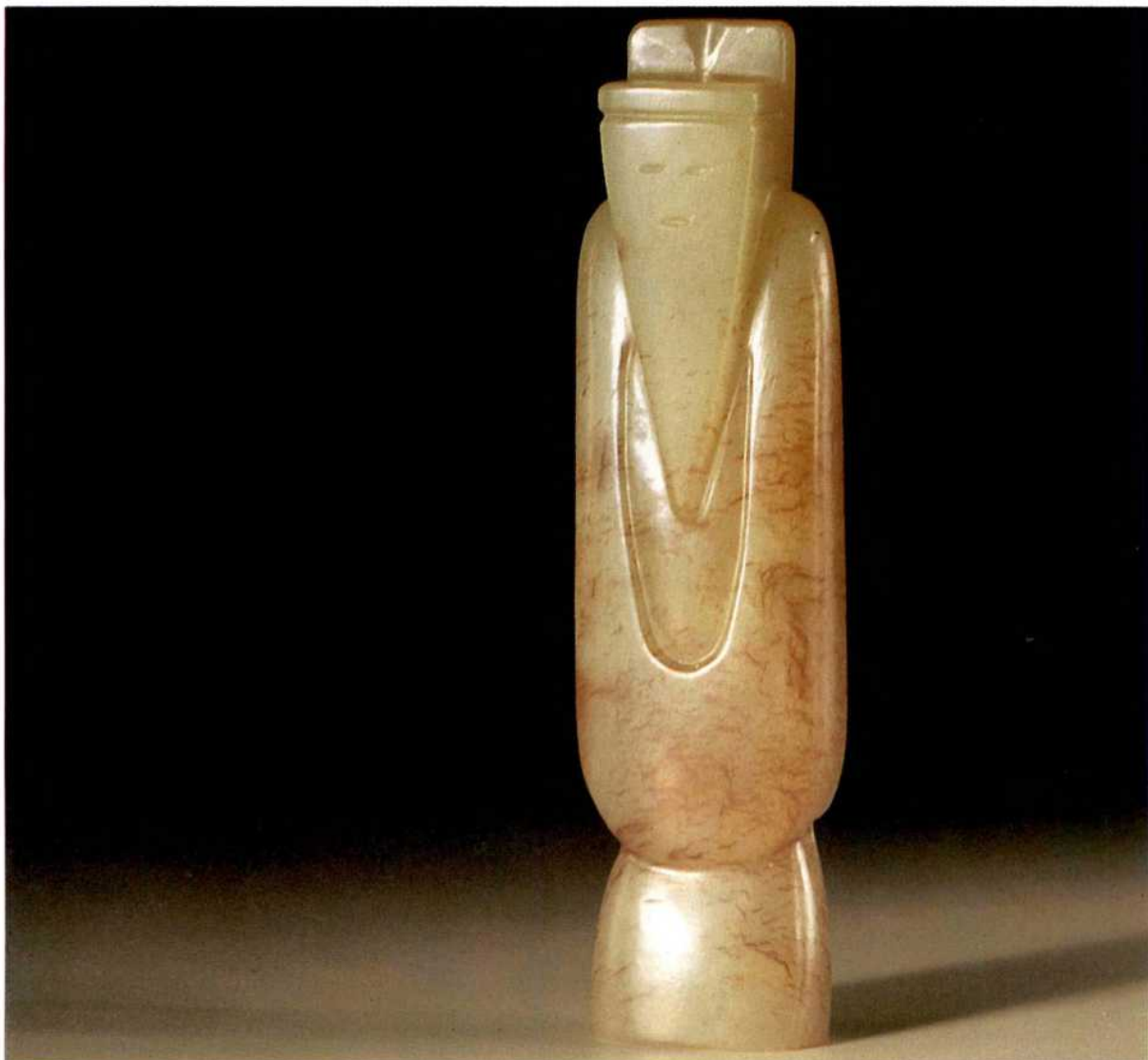
10. Jade Bi Disk with Dragons. Han dynasty. After *Zhongguo meishu quanji* (The Great Treasury of Chinese Art), vol. 9 (Jades), plate 190.

THE HAN TO TANG DYNASTIES, 206 BC - AD 907

The Han dynasty (206 BC-AD 221), coming shortly after the first unification of the country and enjoying increased contact with the outside world, saw the appearance of major religious and philosophical changes, with direct influence upon jade making. The Daoist religion utilized the traditional belief in the miraculous qualities of jade by assigning to it preservative powers, used both during and after life. To help prolong the living body, jade powder was ingested and for burial jade amulets (of various subjects, such as cicadas) were used to fill the body orifices (figure 9), while for the wealthy, ground jade was mixed with rice and placed in the tomb for the spirits, along with jade cups, dishes, and various implements. Finally, the entire body was sometimes encased in a suit of jade plaques.

The traditional importance assigned to the pig, noted above during neolithic times with the jade pig-dragon, is reaffirmed during the Han dynasty with the use of small jade pigs, held in the hands of the deceased. The number and variety of jade animals also increased during the Han period, partly due to Daoist needs, such as animals of the quadrants.

The increased wealth of Han China encouraged the making of jade implements for daily use, such as belt hooks and sword scabbard decorations as well as revivals or archaisms of traditional ritual objects, such as *bi* disks and *congs*, enriching the no longer understood religious shapes with complex decorations, such as dragons crawling over the surface of a traditionally plain *bi* disk (figure 10). Another of the distinctive subjects of Han jade production was the human form, seldom needed before. These often highly stylized images (figure 11), along with the numerous animals noted above, indicate a shift in subject-matter for jade working, one that would continue during the following



11. Jade Human Figure. Han dynasty. Height: 8.5 centimetres. Courtesy S. Bernstein & Co. After R. Fisher, *Magic, Art and Order: Jade in Chinese Culture*, Palm Springs, 1990, plate 111.



12. Standing Jade Semitic Figure. Tang dynasty (AD 618-907). Height: 18.6 centimetres. Private Collection. After R. Fisher, *Magic, Art and Order: Jade in Chinese Culture*, Palm Springs, 1990, plate 108.



13. Pair of Jade Recumbent Rams. Six Dynasties period (AD 221-581). Length: 8.9 centimetres. Collection of Dr and Mrs Marvin Gordon. After R. Fisher, *Magic, Art and Order: Jade in Chinese Culture*, Palm Springs, 1990, plate 28.

14. Jade Horse. Tang dynasty. Length: 6.5 centimetres. Collection W. P. Chung. After R. Fisher, *Magic, Art and Order: Jade in Chinese Culture*, Palm Springs, 1990, plate 91.

centuries. The Han period was one of assessment, a consideration of man's place in the cosmos, of increased interest in the everyday world along with the world of myth and belief, but these myths and beliefs were associated with an altered vision of a unified China, no longer the dynastic feudal world of the preceding centuries.

After the fall of the Han dynasty, early in the third century, China underwent centuries of civil war, ultimate re-unification and the dominance of the Buddhist religion. Oddly, there seemed to be little need for Buddhist jade ritual objects and unlike the influence



15. Jade Pendant. Song dynasty (AD 960-1279). Height: 7.5 centimetres. Collection Gerald Godfrey, Hong Kong. After R. Fisher, *Magic, Art and Order: Jade in Chinese Culture*, Palm Springs, 1990, plate 32.

of Daoism, jade production was essentially unaffected by the imported religion. What did occur after the Han period was a continuation of the production of jade animals, both realistically observed and mythological creations, as well as some remarkable human figures, including a foreigner (figure 12), perhaps a Semitic trader well known during the internationalism of the Tang dynasty (AD 618-907). Like the human figure, a pair of recumbent rams (figure 13) is remarkable in realism, even to the details of the faces and colouration of the stone. Such close observation of humans and animals had been rare during the earlier dynasties and is related to a different world-view, now more secular as well as more confident.

Among modern Chinese collectors, the highest regard is reserved for ancient jades that retain most of the original, smooth shape of the stone, keeping the rounded surfaces and tactile quality always admired in jade. Few examples of Tang jades can match the softened shape of a small, brown stone, turned into a sleeping horse, with minimal working on an already beautifully coloured piece of jade (figure 14). Several levels of jade appreciation can be seen in this one piece: small enough to hold in the hand or carried in the pocket, smooth to the touch, with rich, hearty colours (especially popular during the Tang period), and the attainment of a remarkable degree of realism with what seems to be a minimum of effort. The energy and confidence of the Tang period is embodied in this small masterpiece, and those qualities still prevail a thousand years later as the chief criteria for quality among modern-day Chinese jade connoisseurs.

The epoch between the Tang and the early modern period, beginning with the Ming dynasty in the fourteenth century, is the most difficult to document in Chinese jade studies. The lack of dated tombs, civil wars, and the rise of other art-forms associated particularly with the court during the Song dynasty (AD 960-1279), all contributed to the problems in analyzing the development and dating of jade. Although the Song rulers were often politically inept, there is little to question regarding their support for and contribution to the artistic arenas. Several of the emperors were themselves successful calligraphers, poets, and painters and this courtly milieu fostered a climate of artistic endeavour that produced some of the finest achievements in all of Chinese art. One of the prime interests of Song scholars was the study and analysis of ancient texts and objects from earlier dynasties. This led to the interpretation and replicating of the objects, and this fascination with the distant past included the making of archaistic jades, a practice well known during the Han dynasty but now enlarged and more sophisticated.

Another quality associated with Song jade was the increased appreciation of the material itself. Creamy white jade and many Song pieces, especially, seemed to have been mainly produced to exhibit the sensuous material, with little or no ceremonial or archaistic intent. Brushwashers, pendants, cups, and plaques—implements used by the Song court—fit well into the practices of a society geared to the world of the arts. A pendant (figure 15) consisting of paired dragons in creamy yellow jade, embodies the sheer love of the material without any need for ritual or functional purpose and such examples of sophisticated skill are a harbinger of centuries to come, when the shift from the early ritual uses to direct appreciation of the material is completed. Such approaches to jade working continue, as well as the archaisms and literary allusions (especially the Chinese love of the rebus or verbal punning), and the extensive use of jade as jewellery, all serving to describe the craft of jade over the past thousand years. There is no reduction in quality of the products but the purposes for which jade is made move into ever greater arenas of aesthetic delight.

NOTES

1. Cheng Te-k'un, "Chinese Jade: A General Survey," Ip Yee, *Chinese Jade Carving* (Hong Kong, 1983), pp. 29-33.
2. Wu Hung, "A Great Beginning: Ancient Chinese Jades and the Origins of Ritual Art," *Chinese Jades from the Mu-Fei Collection* (London: Bluett & Sons, 1991).
3. Angus Forsyth, "Post-neolithic to Han Jades," R. Keverne, *Jade* (New York, 1991), p. 97.
4. Wu Hung, *Mu-Fei Collection*.

The Working of Jade in the Ming and Qing Dynasties

James C. Y. Watt

THE Ming dynasty, established after the expulsion of the Mongols in 1368, was politically a restoration of native rule. However, the cultural impact of nearly one hundred years of Mongol rule was such that the Ming dynasty was in many ways the inheritor of the Mongol legacy. Not that the Mongols themselves contributed largely to a civilization based on millennia of sedentary living, but they were instrumental in hastening the contact between peoples who would otherwise not naturally have found each other sympathetic. The exposure of China, or what was left of China in the latter half of the Song dynasty (known as the Southern Song, 1127-1279), to the arts and cultures of other parts of the Mongol empire—from the Islamic States of Western Asia to Tibet, Central Asia, and areas in northern China formerly ruled by sinicized nomadic peoples—produced a transformation in the language of the decorative arts in China that can be regarded as the last major stylistic change before the present period. This change is as evident in the working of jade as in other branches of the decorative arts.



1. Large Bowl. Completed in 1265, minor re-cutting in 1746, 1748-1749, 1753. Greenish-white jade (nephrite) with large black specks; measures 135 x 182 centimetres across the opening. Round Fort, Peking. After *Zhongguo meishu quanji* (The Great Treasury of Chinese Art), vol. 9 (Jades), plate 266.



2a. Brush Washer. Ming period (fifteenth century). Green jade (nephrite) with reddish brown markings; height: 5.8 centimetres, length: 16 centimetres, width: 12.3 centimetres. Hong Kong Museum of Art, C. 69.60. Reproduced by permission of the Urban Council of Hong Kong.

2b. Exterior Base of Brush Washer.

EARLY INFLUENCES

To illustrate the continued influences of the artistic style in jade working which developed in the Mongol or Yuan period (1279-1368), one might take the example of a particular type of vessel which recurred from time to time since its genesis in the thirteenth century. The series begins with the famous greenish-white jade wine bowl with large black specks that is now housed in the Round Fort in Peking (Beijing), having been placed there by Emperor Qianlong (figure 1). The massive jade carving was completed in the year 1265, when the Mongols were already in Peking but before Kublai Khan declared the city the capital of his empire in 1272. The large wine bowl measures 135 x 182 centimetres across the opening and weighs approximately 3500 kilogrammes. It was one of the wonders of the court of the Mongol Khans in Peking, having been variously recorded in the fourteenth century by Chinese writers as well as a Christian emissary to the Mongol court, Friar Odoric of Pordenone. Even disregarding size considerations, the wine bowl has little to do with traditional Chinese jade working up to this time. The exterior of the bowl is enlivened with a scene of fantastic aquatic animals among waves, that is reminiscent of the art of the states of Liao (AD 907-1125) and Jin (1115-1234) in northern China rather than that of the contemporaneous native state of Song in the south. The use of such an enormous vessel for holding wine was also more in keeping with Mongol than Chinese cultures.

During the early Ming period in the fifteenth century, the energetic if somewhat chaotic, decorative style of the late Yuan period went through a dual transformation: it became ordered and sinicized. The process is well known to students of Chinese blue and white porcelain. Its manifestation in jade working is illustrated by comparing the jade wine bowl with a brush-washer which exhibits typical characteristics of the decorative arts of the fifteenth century (figures 2a,b). While the motif of fantastic animals in water has been retained, the aquatic animals only take the form of Chinese dragons and are placed in a well-ordered manner, with the heads of three dragons appearing at the corners of the vessel, to be balanced by a flaming pearl at the remaining corner. The exterior of the vessel is entirely covered with depictions of clouds and waves which in themselves are also Chinese motifs.

Some time during the seventeenth century, the jade wine bowl disappeared from the palace grounds. The Emperor Qianlong (r. 1736-1795), having learned of its existence from the writing of the fourteenth-century author Tao Zongyi, ordered a search for the fabled treasure. It was eventually found in a Taoist temple west of the Forbidden City where it was used as a container for pickled vegetables. He ordered it to be placed in the Round Fort just north of the palace where it is on public display today.



3. Large Bowl. Qing period (c. 1774). Green jade (nephrite); height: 11.5 centimetres, length: 44.5 centimetres, width: 32 centimetres. The Metropolitan Museum of Art, Gift of Heber R. Bishop, 1902, 02.18.689. Emperor Qianlong's inscription, dated 1774, is carved on the inside base and on the exterior base is a single whirlpool of water.

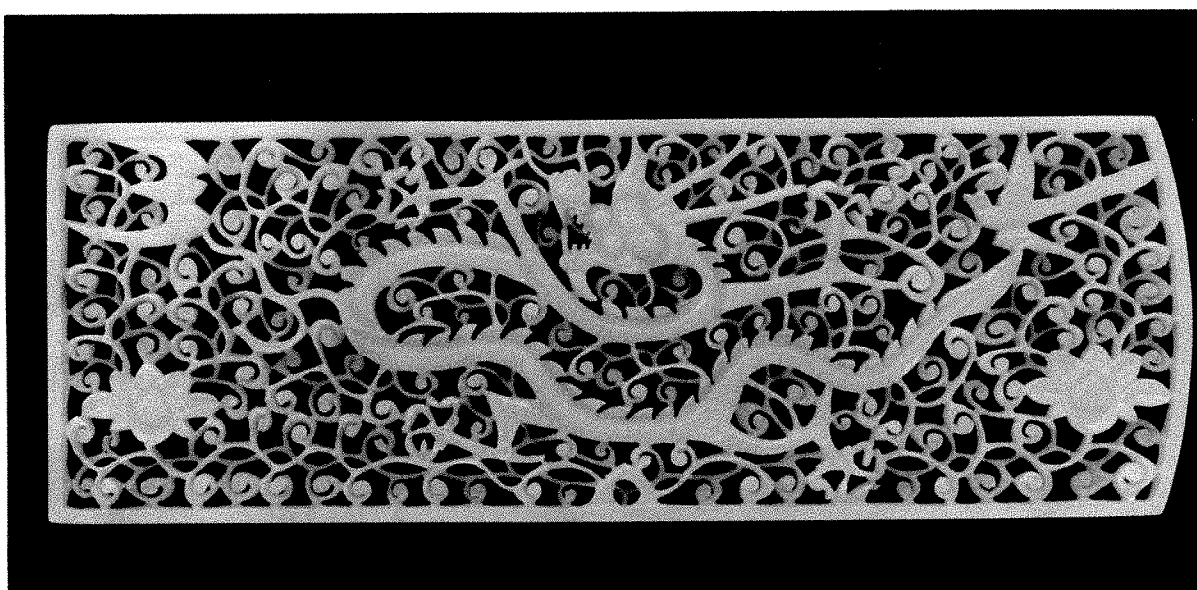
During Qianlong's reign, a number of jades were made in the style of this bowl with clouds and dragons on the exterior. Among these, the green jade bowl in the Bishop Collection at the Metropolitan Museum is one of the biggest (figure 3). Although this green jade bowl, which carries an inscription by Qianlong dated 1774, was made after the recovery in 1745 of the thirteenth-century "original", it is closer in form and style to the fifteenth-century version (figures 2a,b). It displays the usual characteristics of Qing period interpretation of works of art of the Ming period—that is to say, the form is stiff and the decorative pattern formal and lifeless. As in the fifteenth-century version, the dragons emerge from the clouds and the water motif is on the base and is totally invisible unless the vessel is suspended in mid-air.

The difference between the Ming and Qing treatment of the "waves" is that whereas the Ming version is of considerable complexity and minutely detailed with eddies and breakers, the Qing version consists only of a single swirl. This characteristic applies to all Qing-fashioned jade of this type, irrespective of the size of the vessel.

The three pieces described above illustrate the continuity and evolution in Chinese jade working in both the style and workmanship within the tradition established during the Yuan period. There were, of course, other traditions or schools of jade working in the Ming period which traced their origins to much earlier times. Before discussing these, however, it may be in order to give an outline of the uses and production of jade in the Ming period.

PRODUCTION OF MING JADE

From what might be conjectured from historical writings and confirmed by available archaeological records, it would appear that the use of jade was confined largely to the imperial family and senior officials, while in the later periods jade articles were used by a larger cross-section of the population, especially in prosperous areas in south-east China. Jades recovered from the graves of Ming princes and court officials usually pertain to the display of wealth and rank, such as decorative plaques for the belt (figure 4) or are items of regalia, such as the *qui*-sceptre or composite jade pendants (figure 5). In the Jiangnan region in south-east China, especially in the Jiangsu province and what is now the municipality of Shanghai, jades are often found at tombs of the late Ming period of civil servants and members of otherwise prosperous households. These are mainly articles of daily use, such as seals, cups and dishes, and personal ornaments such as bracelets (figure 6) and hairpins (figures 7a,b). Again, some forms of bracelet may have been introduced to China during the Yuan period. A gold version of the bracelet with two dragon heads holding a pearl between them was found in a tomb of the fourteenth century, and the oval shape of the bracelet in figure 6 also suggests a metal prototype.



4. Belt Plaque. Ming period (sixteenth to early seventeenth century). White jade (nephrite); length: 15.7 centimetres, width: 5.4 centimetres, thickness: 0.75 centimetres. The Metropolitan Museum of Art, Gift of Heber R. Bishop, 1902, 02.18.390. This relatively long plaque decorated the end of a leather belt.



5. Pendants. Ming period (early seventeenth century). White jade (nephrite); overall length: 33 centimetres. After *The Royal Treasures of Dingling—Imperial Ming Tomb*, Peking, 1989. These objects were found in Dingling, at the tomb of Emperor Shenzong—who died in 1620—and his two wives.

To resume the discussion of schools of jade working in the Ming period, it can be said that even if the belt plaques originated no later than the seventh century, the motifs and workmanship—especially the use of openwork—owe much to the new style that gradually evolved in the Yuan period. The *qui*-sceptres and composite pendants, on the other hand, are revivals of the traditional use of jade going back to the bronze age in the Zhou dynasty (1066-221 BC).

The increased use of jade in South China during the second half of the Ming dynasty was brought about by the prosperity generated by the growth of industry and commerce, including overseas trade, in areas around the city of Suzhou. During this period Suzhou became a flourishing centre of the arts and crafts, including jade working. One master jade artist of Suzhou, Lu Zigang, became so famous that for a century after him, innumerable jades were “signed” with his name. Indeed, it was not until very recently that the fact that he lived in the late sixteenth century became common knowledge to collectors and dealers. Even now it is not easy to sort out among the hundreds of signed Zigang jades those that might have been fashioned by the master himself and the work of later periods.

Among the few articles that can be associated with Lu Zigang are drinking cups in archaistic style (*zhi*) and hairpins with designs of narcissi or dragons (figures 7a,b). Of the various types of jade bearing his signature, these two are both mentioned in contemporary literature and attested by archaeological finds of the late Ming period. The hairpin with dragons (figures 7a,b) is inscribed with the name Zigang and possibly might have come from his atelier. Jade objects of Lu Zigang and, for that matter, nearly all the work of the Suzhou school, are of pure white nephrite.

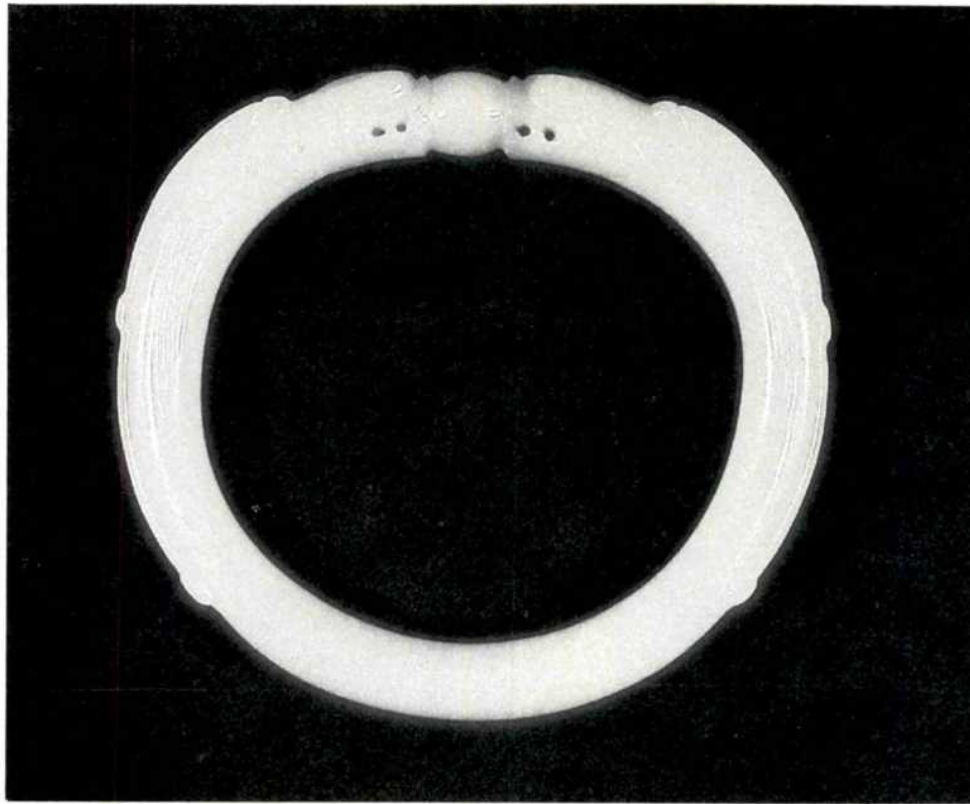
In spite of a residual Mongol influence along the trade routes leading to the jade-producing areas of Khotan and Yarkand in Chinese Central Asia, there seemed to be no great difficulty in obtaining jade in Ming China. There was at least no indication of the supply not meeting demand at any time, whether it was early in the dynasty or in the heyday of the jade working industry in Suzhou and surrounding areas from the late sixteenth to seventeenth centuries. However, it would seem that the finest quality jades were brought to the prosperous cities in the south where they would have commanded higher commercial prices, and the less favoured green material was sent as “tribute” to the court or sold on the market in Peking. This can be inferred from finds in the tomb of the Emperor Shenzong, whose reign (1573-1620) was known as Wanli, which included both white and green jades. Moreover, the articles in green jade are of a distinctly different workmanship from that of the Suzhou region, being thicker in body and cruder in execution. Similar jade articles are still to be found in the collection of the Palace Museum in Peking today.

Another observation that can be made of later Ming green jade working is that certain pieces seem to owe something in their style and decorative motifs to Islamic influence. An example of this type of work is in the Seattle Art Museum (figure 8). The floral pattern within the heart-shaped frame on the side of the ewer and the depressions made for the inset of stones (now lost) are both more characteristic of Islamic jades than that of native Chinese work. It thus appears that there was a school of jade working in Peking that was independent of the Southern School centred at Suzhou and that this northern tradition might have been connected in some way to the jade working of Islamic peoples in Central Asia from where the material came. Yet, the study of the history of jade working in Central Asia is still at the stage of conjecture and any hypothesis formed at present must await future confirmation.

THE ERA OF QING ARTISTRY

At the beginning of the Qing dynasty (1644-1911), jade working continued to flourish in Suzhou and its neighbouring cities with little change in style and workmanship. As can be expected, new types of ornaments, such as the plaque pendant, became popular and the decoration was often taken from wood-block prints of the period (figures 9a,b). Some of these pendants, made a century after the active period of Lu Zigang, are signed with his name and to this day remain extremely popular items for the Chinese collector of fine jades.

The important story of jade working in the Qing period, however, began with



6. Bracelet. Ming period (1368-1644). Greenish white jade (nephrite); centre diameter: 7.6, 5.4 centimetres, inner diameter: 7.0, 4.8 centimetres. Collection of Judith Ogden Bullitt.

7a. Hairpin. Ming period (late sixteenth to early seventeenth century). White jade (nephrite); length: 12.8 centimetres. Collection of Judith Ogden Bullitt. The name of Zigang is inscribed on the body of the dragon at the centre of the shaft.

7b. Line Drawing of Inscription on Hairpin.



8. Ewer. Ming period (sixteenth century). Green jade (nephrite); height: 20.3 centimetres. Seattle Art Museum, Eugene Fuller Memorial Collection, 33.77. Photograph: Paul Macapia.

9a,b. Plaque Pendant (obverse and reverse). Qing period (Kangxi reign, 1672-1722). White jade (nephrite); height: 6 centimetres, width: 4.4 centimetres, thickness: 0.6 centimetres. Seattle Art Museum, Eugene Fuller Memorial Collection, 37.112. Photograph: Paul Macapia. Both the illustration and the poem are taken from a wood-block printed book first published in the Kangxi reign. At the end of the poem (in the bottom left-hand corner) is the signature of Zigang.

Emperor Qianlong, an inveterate collector of every form of art including works in jade, who commissioned many objects large and small. The palace workshops were staffed with craftsmen from the south and large-scale jades requiring simultaneous or team work by a number of craftsmen were executed in Yangzhou and transported north along the Grand Canal.

The supply of jade to the Qing court increased dramatically in the second half of the eighteenth century especially after 1760, when the jade-producing areas in Xinjiang were firmly incorporated into the fold of the Qing empire. The commercial supply of raw material to jade working centres in the south increased correspondingly. As in earlier times, some of the finest quality stones found their way to Suzhou rather than Peking, the capital. Workshops in southern cities produced jade objects commercially and took on commissions from the court when orders exceeded the capacity of craftsmen working in the palace. The half-century beginning in 1760 saw the greatest development of jade working in the Qing period, both in quantity and quality.

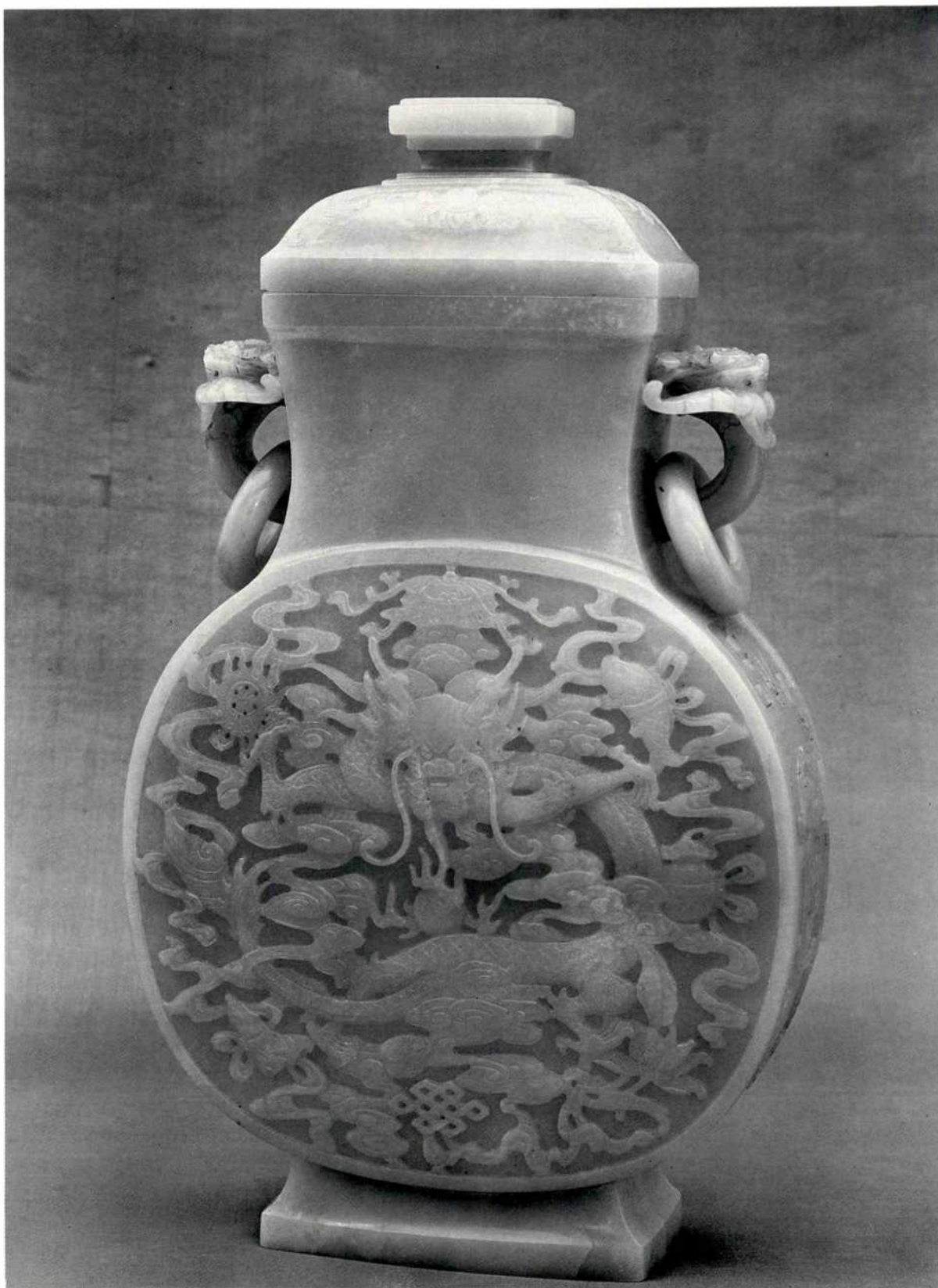
A notable aspect of the decorative arts of the Qing period, including jade working, is the dominance of court taste, especially during the reign of Yongzheng (1723-1735) and Qianlong. These emperors took a personal interest in the manufacture of objects, and design drawings by court artists were submitted for imperial approval or amendment before they were passed on to craftsmen for execution. Indeed, design ideas often came from the emperor himself. The large number of court commissions carried out in South China also had the effect of influencing the decorative motifs and styles of commercial productions. Whereas during the late Ming and early Qing periods, the products of palace workshops often represented a refinement of creative ideas of independent craftsmen in the south, during the eighteenth century commercial products became derivatives of "imperial wares".

Jade working in the eighteenth century can be broadly divided into three classes. There were traditional wares such as vessels in more or less archaistic forms (figure 10), personal ornaments, and articles for the study—for example, incense burners and brush holders. An "innovative" idea of Emperor Qianlong, was the exact copying in jade of antiques, whether they were archaic bronze vessels of the Zhou period or jade bowls of the Yuan dynasty. A jade stem-bowl with cover in the Seattle Art Museum (figure 11) is almost an exact copy of an archaic bronze vessel in the palace collection. A Yuan period jade bowl, now in the Cleveland Museum of Art, is the prototype of several known copies made during Qianlong's reign. Some copies of early jades involved the dyeing of the copy to simulate the effect of long periods of burial. Most copies bear the reign date of Qianlong, but some were marked with that of earlier reigns such as those of Emperor Huizong of the Song dynasty (1101-1125).

Another class of jade working originated as a result of Qianlong's campaign in Xinjiang. The emperor was fascinated by booties and tributes from the newly pacified regions in Central Asia in the form of jades worked in the Mughal style. Some of these might have indeed come from Mughal India, known as Hindustan in the Qianlong age. From the late eighteenth century onwards, a large number of vessels produced in Peking showed distinct influences of Mughal-style jade working (figure 12). A few were direct copies of Mughal jades from India or Islamic jades from Central Asia.

The third category of jade working in the Qianlong and subsequent periods was that of jade mountains and screens decorated with landscapes carved in high relief, some of which are of considerable size. This again was possible only after China gained control of the jade-producing regions of Khotan and Yarkand in Xinjiang. The largest jade mountain known measures over two hundred centimetres high and still stands in the grounds of the Old Palace in Peking. This type of jade working originated in the seventh century but the early examples were mostly small-scale representations of grottos and garden scenes. After the supply of jade had become plentiful in the later period of Qianlong's reign, large landscapes were fashioned in jades either as "miniature mountains" or in relief on rectangular or circular screens (figure 13). From the palace records, it is known that Qianlong commissioned a number of jade mountains and screens based on famous landscape paintings.

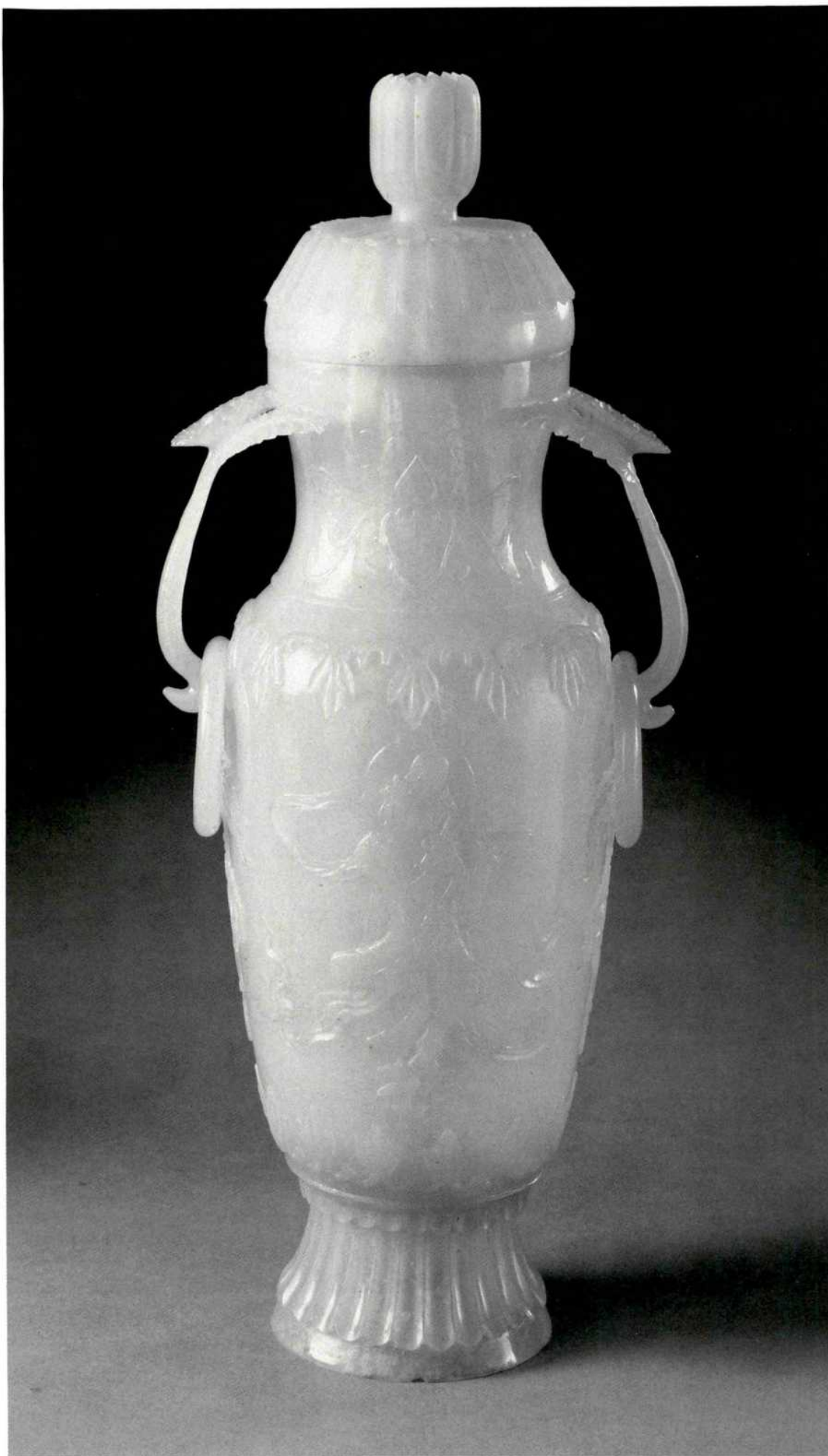
Both the procurement of jade and the production of worked objects declined after the reign of Qianlong, reflecting the declining fortunes of the Qing empire. One of the



10. Covered Jar. Qing period (Qianlong reign, 1736-1795). White jade (nephrite); height: 31.5 centimetres, width: 18.5 centimetres, diameter: 7.7 centimetres. The Metropolitan Museum of Art, Gift of Heber R. Bishop, 1902, 02.18.606.



11. Vessel in Archaic *Dou* Form. Qing period (Qianlong reign, dated 1773). White jade (nephrite); height: 20.6 centimetres, width: 25.4 centimetres, diameter: 19 centimetres. Seattle Art Museum, Eugene Fuller Memorial Collection, 35.10. Photograph: Paul Macapia.



12. Covered Vase. Qing period (late eighteenth-nineteenth century). White jade (nephrite); height: 29 centimetres, width: 12 centimetres. Los Angeles County Museum of Art, Gift of Sunny and Isadore Familian, M. 78.120.2. Photograph: courtesy LACMA (Steve Oliver).



13. Jade Mountain. Qing period (late eighteenth century). Green jade (nephrite); height: 26.8 centimetres, length: 45.6 centimetres, width: 13.5 centimetres. The Metropolitan Museum of Art, Gift of Heber R. Bishop, 1902, 02.18.684.

first edicts issued by the Daoguang emperor when he ascended the throne in 1821 was to stop the sending of "tribute jade" from Khotan and Yarkand. As the remaining stock in the palace was still quite large, the palace workshops were still active, even if most of the products were small personal ornaments. Large articles for official use such as imperial seals were made in Suzhou.

After the burning and looting of the Yuanming Yuan palace by British and French troops in 1860 and the consequent destruction of the jade workshops housed there, the official production of jade objects practically ceased. Only occasionally were jade articles ordered for court use from southern cities—Suzhou for objects in nephrite (from Xinxiang), and Canton (Guangzhou) for works in jadeite which were beginning to be imported into China in some quantity from Burma (Myanmar). The orders were often not fulfilled owing to the lack of government funds. However, craftsmen disbanded from official workshops continued to practise their trade commercially, producing "palace-style" articles for wealthy officials and an increasing number of foreign collectors such as Heber H. Bishop of New York, whose large collection of jades from every part of the world was formed in the late nineteenth century. It is often difficult to distinguish palace-sponsored jades of the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries from the commercial products of the late Qing period. Style and workmanship provide no reliable criteria, as not all late eighteenth-century work is of the highest quality, and there was little change in the style and motifs in late Qing jade working.

For the time being, nearly all Chinese jades of the eighteenth century and later are attributed to the Qianlong period in sale-rooms and most museums. Until further study is undertaken, this state of affairs is likely to remain.

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Jades from the Islamic World

Ralph Pinder-Wilson

GEM stones were as valued and sought after in the Islamic world as they were in most other societies. A vast literature exists concerning the provenance and the medical or magical properties of each and every known stone. This scientific knowledge was inherited from the Ancient World, while popular lore was passed orally from generation to generation. Many inscribed gem stones and jades, intended as personal seals or amulets, have survived in which the choice of stone must have been the decision of the wearer after due consideration of its inherent properties.

Jade, or more properly nephrite to distinguish it from jadeite, seems not to have been identified by ancient authors, since examples of worked jade from the Ancient World are exceedingly rare. In the Islamic world, however, jade is mentioned as early as the eighth century in a treatise on talismans where the properties of jade, it is said, are two: it is a cure for digestive complaints and, among the Turks, believed to ensure victory over an enemy.¹ The word used for jade is *yashm*, which is thought to be of Persian origin. It is known from the anonymous author of the *Hudud al-'alam* written in AD 982 that the jade stone comes from Khotan.²



1. Cup of Olive Green Jade with Handle in the Form of a *Chi*, a Hornless Dragon. Engraved on side in *ruqa'* script: 'Ulugh Beg Gurgan'. Central Asia. 1417-1449. Height: 6 centimetres, length: 19.4 centimetres. Photograph: courtesy British Museum, London.

By far the best source of information about jade is the great polymath Al-Biruni (AD 972-1048). Born beyond the Oxus in Khwarazm, he spent his working life in Ghazna where he wrote his treatise on precious stones and ores for Sultan Maudud (1040-1048).³ No mere cabinet scholar, he was assiduous in studying the stones in the royal treasury and in supplementing this first-hand experience with all the available information he could obtain from his contemporaries and predecessors. Most subsequent writers drew largely on his work and only a few added any facts of substance.

Al-Biruni states that jade is obtained from two riverbeds in the district of Khotan. From one of these comes a pure white jade and, from the other, jade of various colours ranging from grey to black. Known as the "victory stone", jade was used by the Turks to decorate their swords, saddles, and belts in the belief that its presence would aid in achieving victory over their opponents. Jade was also used for its curative properties in treating stomach disorders and eye diseases. Finally, jade was thought to ward off lightning, a claim which Al-Biruni was able to support by his own experiment. In more recent times, travellers in Iran reported that pieces of jade suspended on the outside of castle turrets caused thunderbolts to fall far distant.⁴

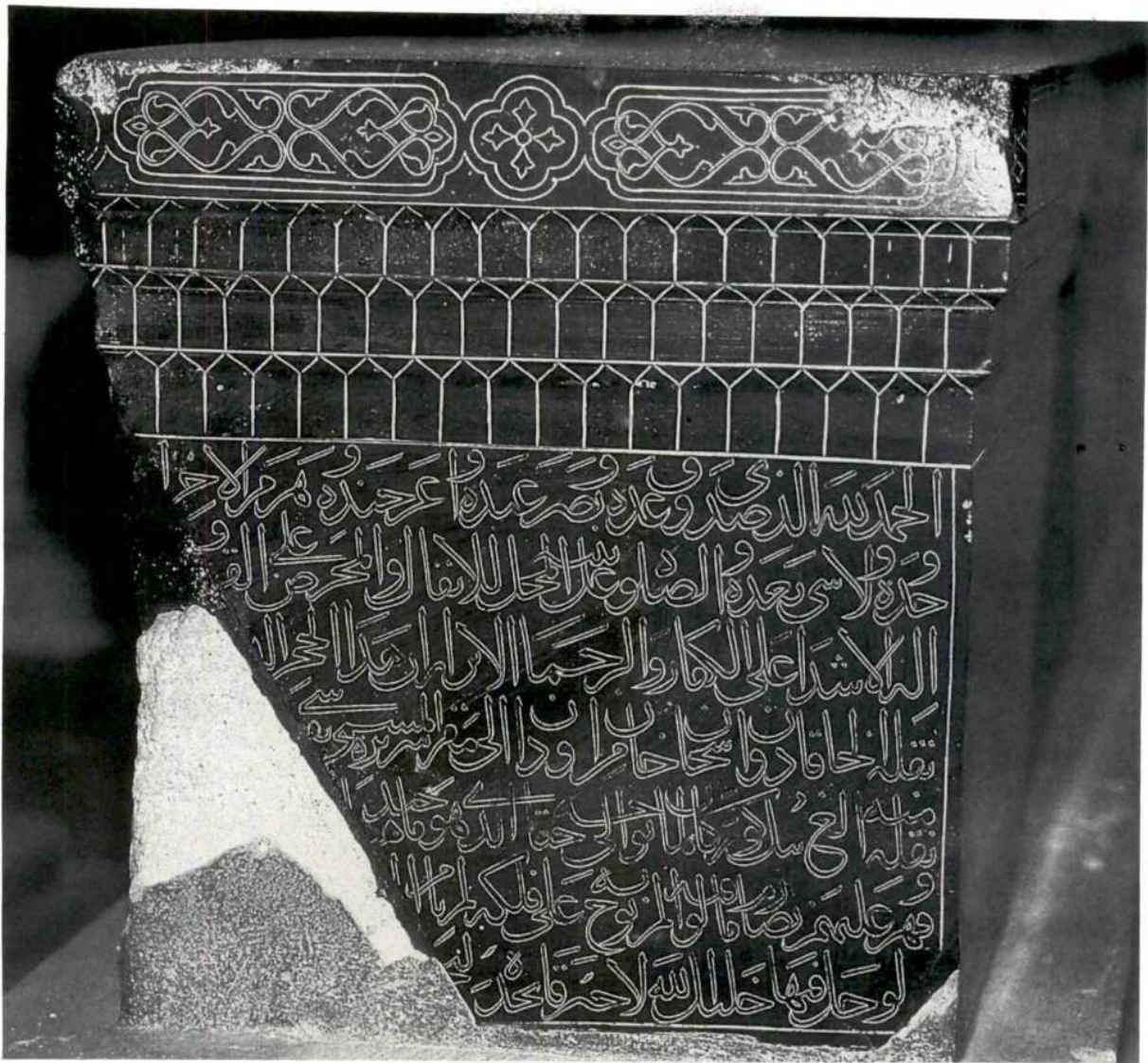
Although there is no surviving jade vessel earlier than the fifteenth century, there are a number of references in historical literature pertaining to jade working. The Chinese record how a jewel-encrusted jade flask was sent to China by the Umayyad caliph, Sulayman, in AD 716;⁵ and a Chinese envoy to Baghdad in 1259 describes the walls of black and white jade in the caliph's palace.⁶ But these statements are not entirely reliable since *yu*, the Chinese term for jade, can be used for any rare or precious stone. Imports of Chinese jades in the Near East are, however, well attested by Muslim sources. In 1303 a Syrian merchant arrived in Yemen from China, with a valuable consignment that included jade vessels such as large dishes encrusted with gold, which were destined as alms for Mecca and Medina;⁷ and in the following year the Rasulid Sultan of Yemen sent rare gifts to the Sultan of Egypt, among which were "choice articles of Chinese porcelain and jade".⁸

JADES IN PERSIA AND TRANSOXIANA

The earliest surviving jades from the Islamic world are associated with Timur's grandson, Ulugh Beg. Born in 1394, he was the son of Timur's eldest son Shah Rukh. At the age of fifteen, he was appointed governor of Transoxiana, in which office he remained until 1446. On his father's death in 1447 he assumed the sovereign power but his tragically short reign was punctuated by family strife and invasion by the Turkomans and Uzbeks. He was murdered in 1449 at the instigation of his own son. A scholar in many fields, including theology and history, his predilection was for the exact sciences, particularly mathematics and astronomy.

Like many of his house, Ulugh Beg was attracted by the arts of China. The Masjid-i muqatta' which he built at Samarqand owed its name to the Chinese decorations of carved and coloured woods covering its ceilings and walls.⁹ Outside the city he laid out his gardens where he built a pavilion known as the Chini-Khana, the walls of which were decorated with porcelain brought from China.¹⁰ It is not known for certain if Chinese craftsmen were employed by Ulugh Beg in Samarqand but it is certainly possible.

Embassies from the courts of Iran and Transoxiana were frequent in the first quarter of the fifteenth century but fewer thereafter. Among the most notable was an embassy from the Ming emperor of China to Ulugh Beg in 1445 that came bearing gifts which included jade vessels.¹¹ It may have been through such an embassy that a jade cup and handle carved in the form of a *chi* — a hornless dragon — was presented to Ulugh Beg whose name is inscribed on the side with the title Gurgan (figure 1). This title is the Persian rendering of the Chaghatay Kürägän, meaning son-in-law, and was adopted by Timur himself and by Ulugh Beg, to signify their connection with the illustrious house of Chingiz Khan through their marriages with princesses of that family. The cup could be as early as 1417 when Ulugh Beg assumed this title. It is tempting to identify it as a gift from the Chinese emperor but while it is true that this vessel is a *cheng* — a water reservoir used for grinding ink in a scholar's study¹² — the style and quality of adornment hardly qualifies it as a product of Chinese imperial workmanship. It is more likely to be a Central Asian work, possibly Khotanese, which



2. Detail of Jade Tombstone of Timur in the Gur-i Amir, Samarqand. The engraved inscription (shown in part) recounts the ancestry of Timur and how the jade was acquired. Samarqand. C. 1425. Length: 192 centimetres, width: 36.75 centimetres, height: 30 centimetres. Photograph: courtesy LACMA (Peter Brenner).

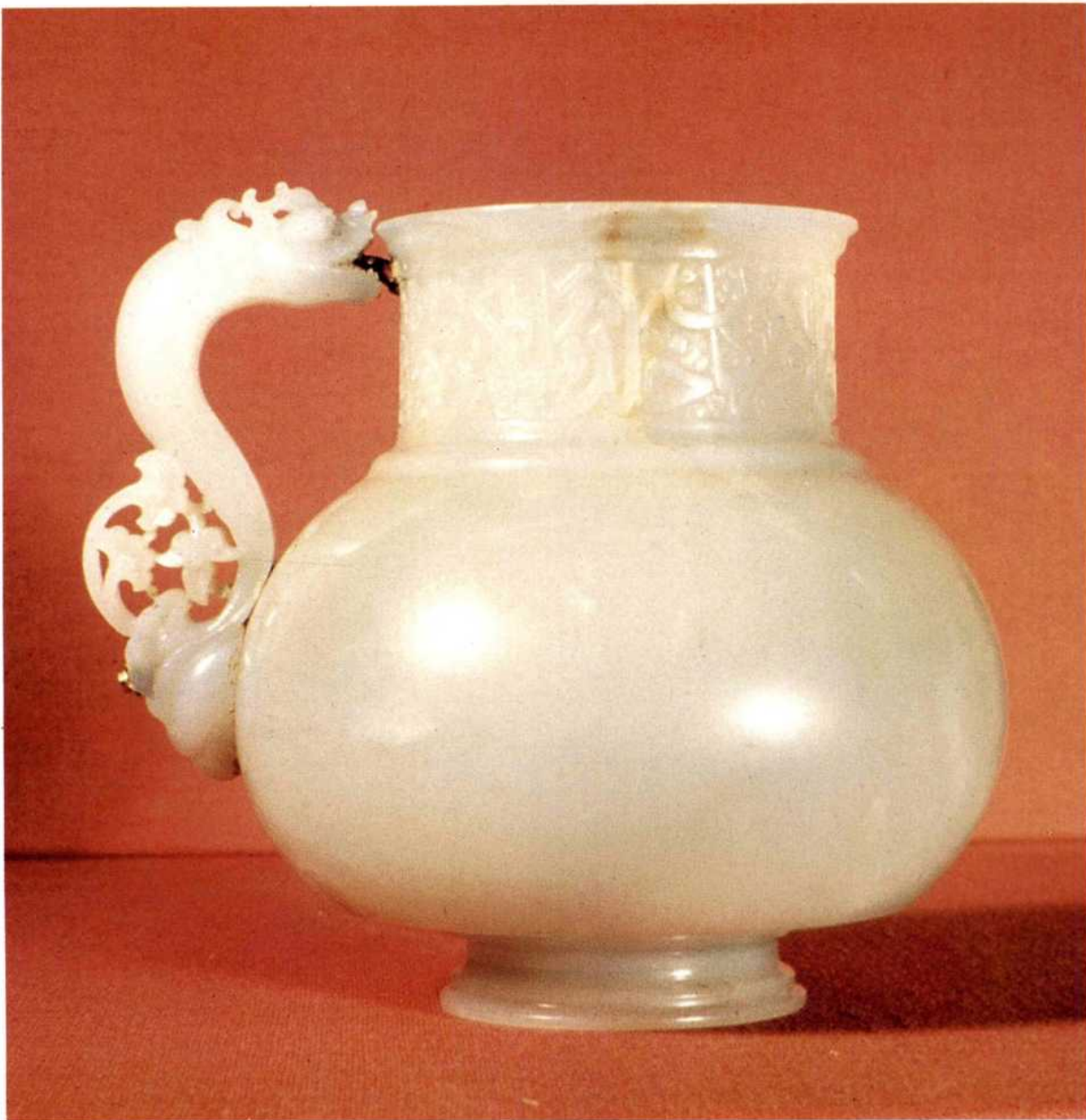
3. Oval Cup of Dark Green Jade with Handle in the Form of a Dragon. Samarqand. 1400-1450. Width: 15.9 centimetres. Photograph: courtesy British Museum, London.

would account for the Chinese form of the vessel and dragon.

Ulugh Beg is also associated with what is probably the earliest jade carving in the Islamic world. This is the great jade monolith commemorating the burial of Timur in his mausoleum, the Gur-i Amir in Samarqand (figure 2). It stands on the ground floor of the mausoleum, the tomb itself being in the crypt. The jade monolith is of dark green nephrite, 192 centimetres long, 36.75 centimetres wide at one end and 30 centimetres at the other, and 30 centimetres high. This more or less rectangular block is engraved on the upper face with a prayer niche and a memorial of Timur's ancestry in *thulth* characters. It also recounts how the stone was brought back as booty by Ulugh Beg after his defeat of the ruler of Moghulistan on the Ili River in 1424-1425.¹³

Timur's jade tombstone is unique both with regard to its size and function; but in treatment and execution it is the work of a mason rather than that of a skilled lapidary. It nevertheless represents an early essay in the handling of jade and was almost certainly made in Samarqand by native craftsmen. It may be assumed, therefore, that a school of jade carving was established in that city. Furthermore, the material was available since the jade mines of Khotan were under the nominal control of the Timurids.

The dark green jade of Timur's tombstone, may have been why this type of jade was chosen for the earliest jade carvings of the Timurid period. Among the finest examples is an oval cup in the British Museum with a handle on one of the longer sides, carved in the form of a dragon's head of which the lower jaw rests on the vessel's lip



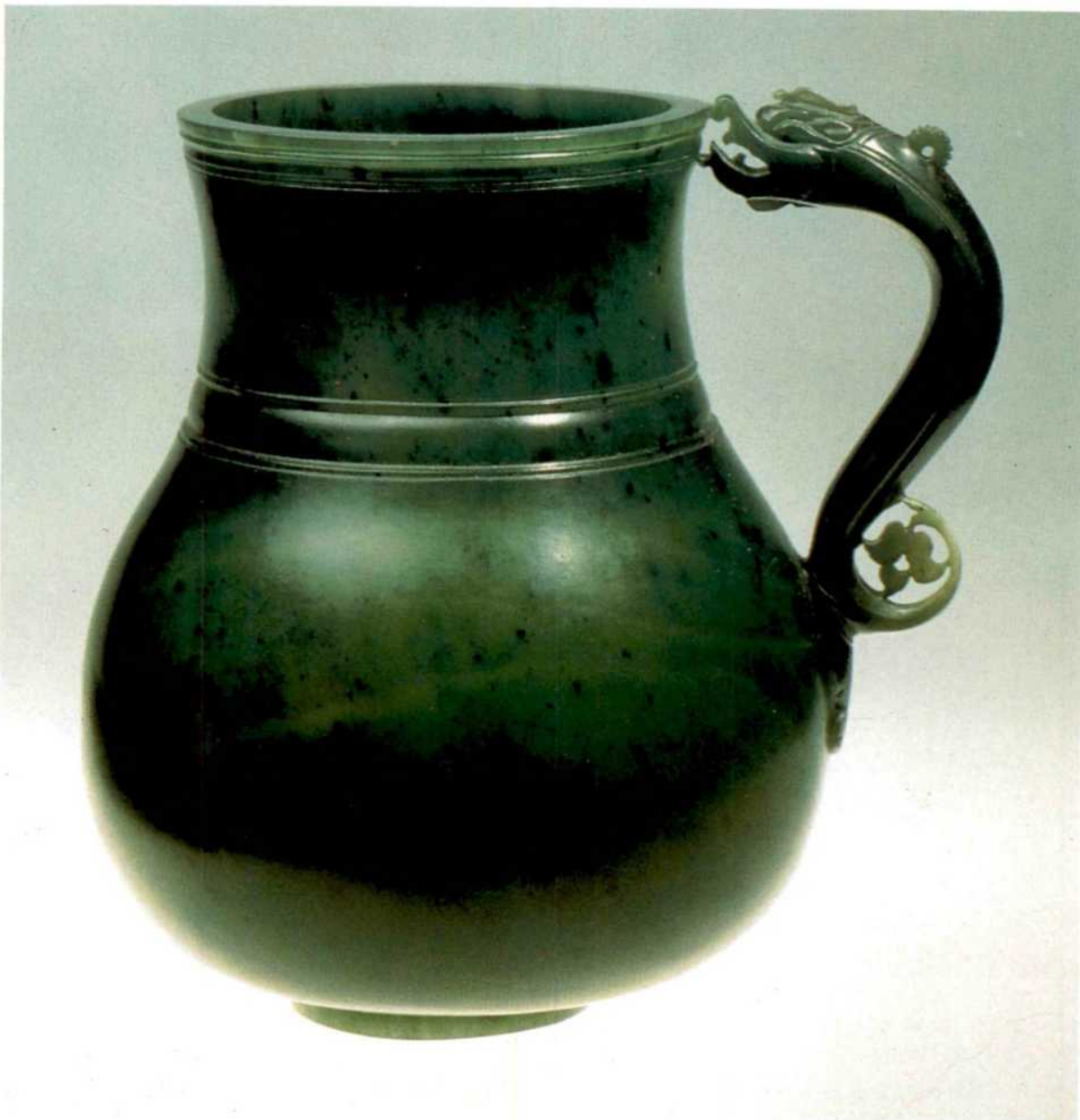
4. Jug of White Jade Carved in Relief with the Name and Regnal Titles of Ulugh Beg Gurgan. Samarqand. 1447-1449. Height: 14.5 centimetres. Photograph: courtesy Calouste Gulbenkian Foundation, Lisbon.

(figure 3). The nephrite is almost black, showing green only in transmitted light.

The form of this cup was evidently popular for there are a number of other examples with only slight variations of detail, such as the dark green cup which was among the treasures installed by Shah Abbas I in his ancestor's shrine at Ardebil and now in the Archaeological Museum at Teheran.¹⁴ A smaller cup with a loop handle terminating in a phoenix head, presently in the Bharat Kala Bhavan, Benares,¹⁵ is inscribed 'Ulugh Beg Gurgani', thus linking the group to Samarqand. This type of vessel was probably intended for wine and has its origin in Central Asia where it can be traced to a cup with a looped handle used by the Mongols as a receptacle for kummis, the handle being for the attachment to a belt or saddle.¹⁶

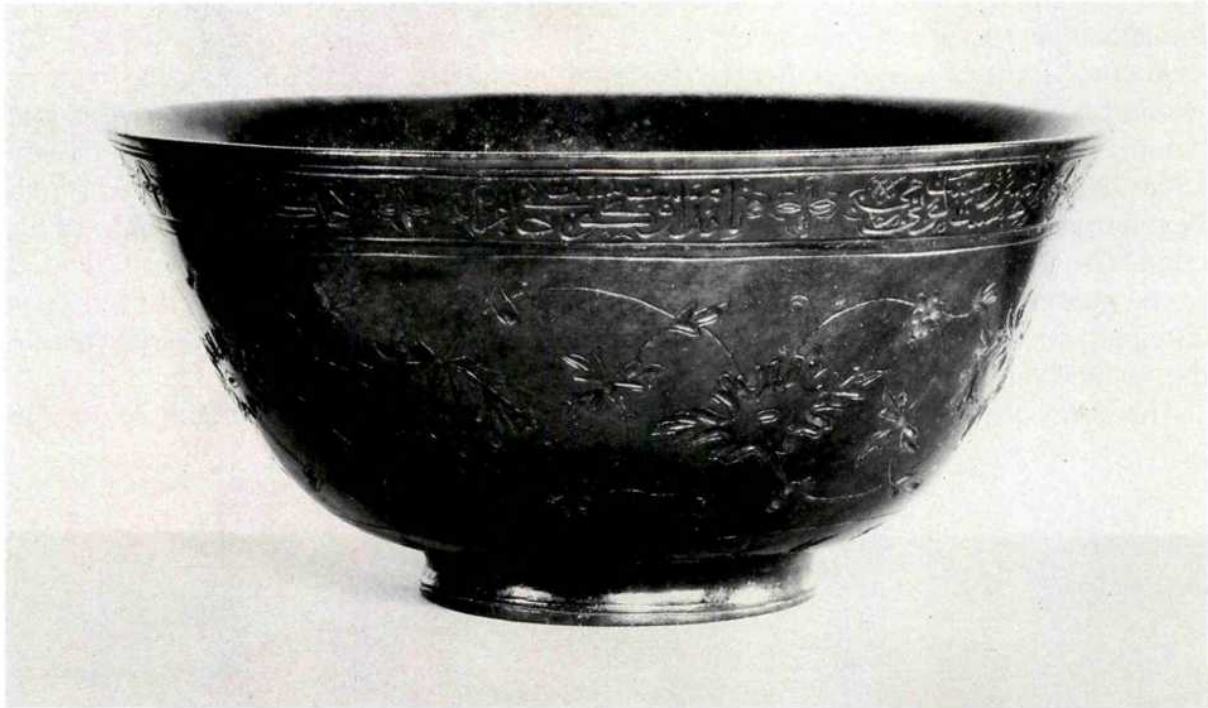
Another form of vessel crafted by the jade artisans of Samarqand is a jug with or without a lid. A number of such jugs have survived. By far the most impressive is that belonging to the Calouste Gulbenkian Foundation in Lisbon (figure 4). This is of cloudy white nephrite. The relief inscription carved around the neck is a dedication to Ulugh Beg Gurgan who is given here the royal titles he assumed during the brief period of his reign. The S-shaped handle in the form of a dragon is fashioned separately and secured to the vessel by rivets. The dragon's head with open jaws and bared teeth, the crest curving back above the eyes, and the delicate decoration of a calyx and flower within the voluted tail appear to be of the highest quality.

This form of tankard originated in Iran where it occurs in the fourteenth century in



5. Jug of Green Jade. Samarqand. 1440-1450. Height: 11.5 centimetres, diameter (mouth): 6.8 centimetres. Private Collection.

the shape of pottery with a plain S-shaped handle. The shape, including the dragon handle and torus moulding at the junction of neck and body, was already being copied in Chinese blue and white porcelain in the reign of the Ming emperor, Hsuan Te (1426-1435).¹⁷ The form was later adopted by the metal workers of Herat who produced a series of bronze and brass dragon handled jugs from 1462 into the first two decades of the sixteenth century. Many of these are decorated with silver and gold inlay; some are also fitted with a domical lid surmounted with a small globular finial.¹⁸



6. Bowl of Dark Green Jade Engraved with Persian Verses and Floral Decoration. Probably Herat. C. 1470-1500. Photograph: courtesy Musée du Louvre, Paris.

7. Pendant or Belt Ornament of Green Jade Engraved with Persian Verses and Carved in Open-work. Probably Herat. 1470-1500. Width: 7.5 centimetres. Photograph: courtesy the Chester Beatty Library, Dublin.

8. Cup of Dark Green Jade with Dragon Handle and Inlaid with Gold. Probably Herat. Late fifteenth century. Height: 4.5 centimetres, diameter: 8 centimetres. Private Collection.





9. Jug of Black Jade with Gold Inlay. Inscription in the name of Shah Isma'il (1501-1524). Herat or Tabriz. Early sixteenth century. Height: 11 centimetres. Photograph: courtesy the Treasury of the Topkapi Saray Museum, Istanbul.

The Gulbenkian jug bears comparison with the finest Mughal and Chinese jades. Since in its inscription, Ulugh Beg is accorded regnal titles, the jug must date from the two years of his reign and represents the full maturity of jade carving in Samarqand, whose principal patron was Ulugh Beg.

The Mughal emperor, Jahangir (r. 1605-1627), who is associated with the first substantial school of jade working in the Indian subcontinent, was a keen collector of the jades of his ancestor Ulugh Beg; he and his son and successor Shah Jahan (r. 1628-1658), have recorded their ownership of the Gulbenkian jug in finely engraved *ta'liq* characters in the years AH 1022/AD 1613 and AH 1056/AD 1646 respectively. In his memoirs, too, Jahangir reports how in 1608 he was presented with a jug of jasper [jade] made in the reign of Mirza Ulugh Beg Gurgan... "Its stone was exceedingly white and pure. Around the neck of the jar they had inscribed the name of the Mirza and the year in *ruq'a* characters. I ordered them to inscribe my name and the auspicious name of Akbar on the edge of the lip of the jar."¹⁹ It is tempting to identify this jug with the Gulbenkian jug but the discrepancies in detail seem to exclude such a possibility.

While this is the only extant vessel of white jade made for Ulugh Beg, there are three other jugs of the same shape, all of green jade and without decoration and inscriptions, their effect depending solely on their form. The first, and probably earliest, is in the National Museum of Arts, Washington.²⁰ The body, slightly depressed and spherical, is set on a low foot ring. The dragon handle is carved integrally with the vessel and the convolution of the tail carved with a stylized rosette formed by a circle of seven pierced holes about a central one. A similar tankard is in the Gallery of Mineralogy at the National Museum of Natural History, Paris, and once belonged to the French King Louis XIV.²¹ It is of translucent green jade and has the same depressed globular body as the jug in Washington. There are the same mouldings on the rim and junction of the neck and body, but the splayed foot is more prominent. The handle, too, is similar except for a small semicircular projection pierced with a tiny eyehole at the back of the neck. This was intended to carry a swivel for a chain attached to the lid, as can be seen in a gold inlaid brass version of precisely this type of jug in the Topkapi Saray Museum.²²

Another jug has recently come to light, now in private possession (figure 5). Unlike the Gulbenkian jug and the other jugs, its body is pear-shaped rather than globular, its diameter being hardly wider than that of the mouth. There is no sharp angle between the neck and body, though a torus moulding serves to suggest a shoulder. The handle, which is integral to the body, also has an eyehole for the lid attachment. The floral motif within the tail is of the same form as that of the Gulbenkian jug, albeit much thinner in section. A variant of the standard form, it probably cannot be far removed in date from the Gulbenkian jug.

The death of Ulugh Beg in 1449 was followed by two decades of internecine rivalry between members of the Timurid House. There is a single worked jade of this period: a small potiche in the Avery Brundage Collection at the Asian Art Museum, San Francisco.²³ Its gently rounded side is engraved with a dedicatory inscription in the name of 'Ala al-Dawla', son of Baysunghur and nephew of Ulugh Beg (1417-1460). The script is decorated with floral motifs. Along with the Gulbenkian jug, this is the only other Timurid white jade object. It, too, came into the possession of Jahangir according to the engraved verse below the rim.

For the remainder of the fifteenth century the Timurid empire, now confined to Khurasan, was under the rule of Sultan Husain Mirza Bayqara (1470-1506) with Herat as the capital. The few worked jades of this period were also probably executed in Herat, where there was an established tradition of carving in marble.²⁴ A footed bowl of striped agate in the Soudavar Collection bears a dedication to Sultan Husain Mirza dated 1470-1471.²⁵ Its decoration is limited to verses engraved below the rim. Since agate and jade require related hard stone techniques, it may be inferred that jade was also capable of being crafted at the Timurid court.

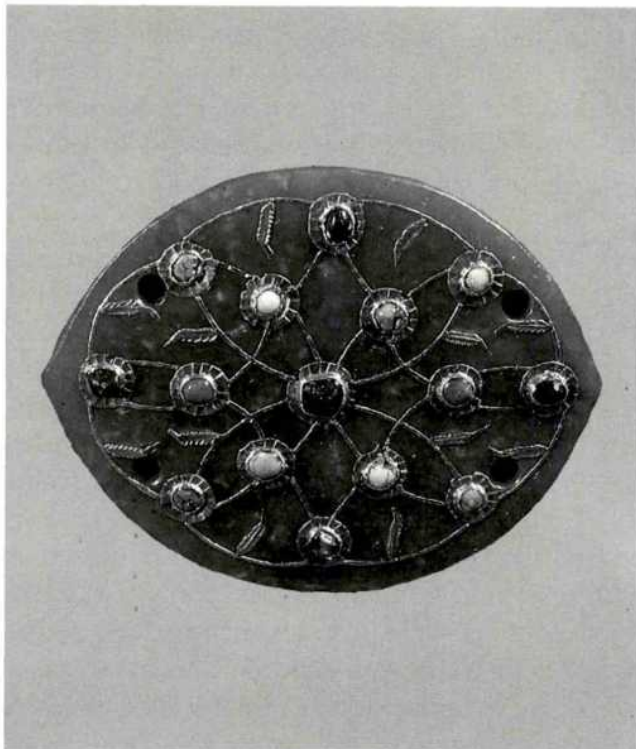
The agate bowl can be compared with a bowl of dark green jade at the Louvre in Paris (figure 6). This shape of bowl with an everted lip is derived from Chinese porcelain and is an example of the Chinese influence on Timurid art. Timurid potters as well adapted the style of decoration in Chinese blue and white porcelain to the particular taste of their

patrons.²⁶ The main field of the Louvre bowl is decorated with a gently undulating plant of six petalled flowers, lotus blossoms and fan-like lotus leaves. While the engraved inscription within cartouches around the rim is similar to the one on the Soudavar bowl, the incising of the exquisite decoration in the main field is an entirely new departure from the jades of Ulugh Beg which depend on their unadorned form and mouldings, the sole decorative working being limited to the modelling of the dragon head.

Another jade of this period is a small circular pendant or belt buckle in the Chester Beatty Library, Dublin (figure 7). The upper surface is crafted in open-work with a lotus scroll within a narrow octagonal border containing Persian verses by Sa'di and Daqiqi, which are also found on contemporary metalwork of the late Timurid period.²⁷

Following varied expression achieved through form and modelling, the next technical innovation was the inlaying of the incised decoration with gold. This technique was used in a small dragon-handled cup of dark green jade, now in private possession (figure 8). Here, the lip of the vessel is everted which, as noted, is a Chinese feature. The outside of the bowl is inlaid in gold with arabesque scrolls, overlaid with polylobed cartouches alternating with lobed rectangular cartouches. This style of composition was probably derived from the tradition of book illumination.²⁸

The finest Iranian gold-inlaid jade is a dragon-handled jug in the Topkapi Saray Museum. It was made for Shah Isma'il I (1501-1524), founder of the Safavid dynasty which supplanted the Timurids in Iran (figure 9). Of black jade, it is larger than those of the period of Ulugh Beg. The handle is of gilt silver and the eyehole behind the dragon's head shows that the vessel originally had a lid. The entire decoration is in gold inlay. Around the neck is an inscription in the *thulth* script, within lobed rectangular cartouches. The torus moulding around the neck is inlaid with paired intertwined foliate scrolls. The main composition covering the whole body is similar to that of the jade cup just described and consists of two rows of spirally voluted foliate scrolls, and overlaying these are four eight-lobed cartouches. Between each cartouche is a small roundel containing four leaves in the form of a whorl or swastika, a rare motif that can be seen in the tile work in the sanctuary *ivan* of the Masjid-i Juma' in Isfahan, added by Shah Isma'il's successor Shah Tahmasp (1524-1576).



10. Jade Plaque with Gold Inlay and Encrustation of Jewels. Ottoman. Sixteenth century. Length: 6.2 centimetres. Photograph: courtesy British Museum, London.

11. Quiver, Cloth of Gold with Embroidered Pearls and Inset with Jewel-encrusted Jade Plaques. Ottoman. C. Seventeenth century. Height: 37 centimetres, width: 18 centimetres. Photograph: courtesy the Treasury of the Topkapi Saray Museum, Istanbul.



12. Ceremonial Flask, Gold Repoussé with Appliqués of Gold and Jewel-encrusted Jade Plaques. Ottoman. C. 1560-1565. Height: 27 centimetres. Photograph: courtesy the Treasury of the Topkapi Saray Museum, Istanbul.

It is not known if jade working continued in Herat after the collapse of the Timurid rule in 1507 when the city fell to the Uzbek, Shaybani Khan. Three years later, it passed into the hands of Shah Isma'il. It is possible that the jade workers were brought to the Safavid capital of Tabriz. In any case, whether the jug was made in Herat or Tabriz, it must have been completed within a short span of time since it was among the loot from the palace of the Hasht Bahisht at Tabriz, ransacked by the soldiers of Salim I after the Turkish victory over the Persians at the battle of Chaldiran in 1514.

After Shah Isma'il's jug, the working of jade seems virtually to have ceased in Persia under the Safavids perhaps owing either to lack of patronage or to the migration of craftsmen to the Ottoman and Mughal courts. The gift of Shah 'Abbas I (1588-1629) of a dragon-handled jade cup of the Ulugh Beg type to his ancestor's shrine at Ardebil has already been described. He also presented a bowl similar in form and style to the Louvre bowl, which may be Iranian work of the sixteenth century.²⁹ The one certain Iranian object of the seventeenth century is a dark green jade handle of a seal of Shah 'Abbas II (1642-1667). This is engraved with arabesques.³⁰

OTTOMAN JADES

Like the Mughal emperors, the Ottoman sultans inherited their Turkish ancestors' appreciation of jade, and an early mention of jade is made in an inventory of Bayazid II of 1505 where there are references to jade plaques, unworked jade, and jade vessels.³¹ Indeed, a partially worked jade jug in the Topkapi Saray Museum shows that there were jade artists at the Ottoman court.

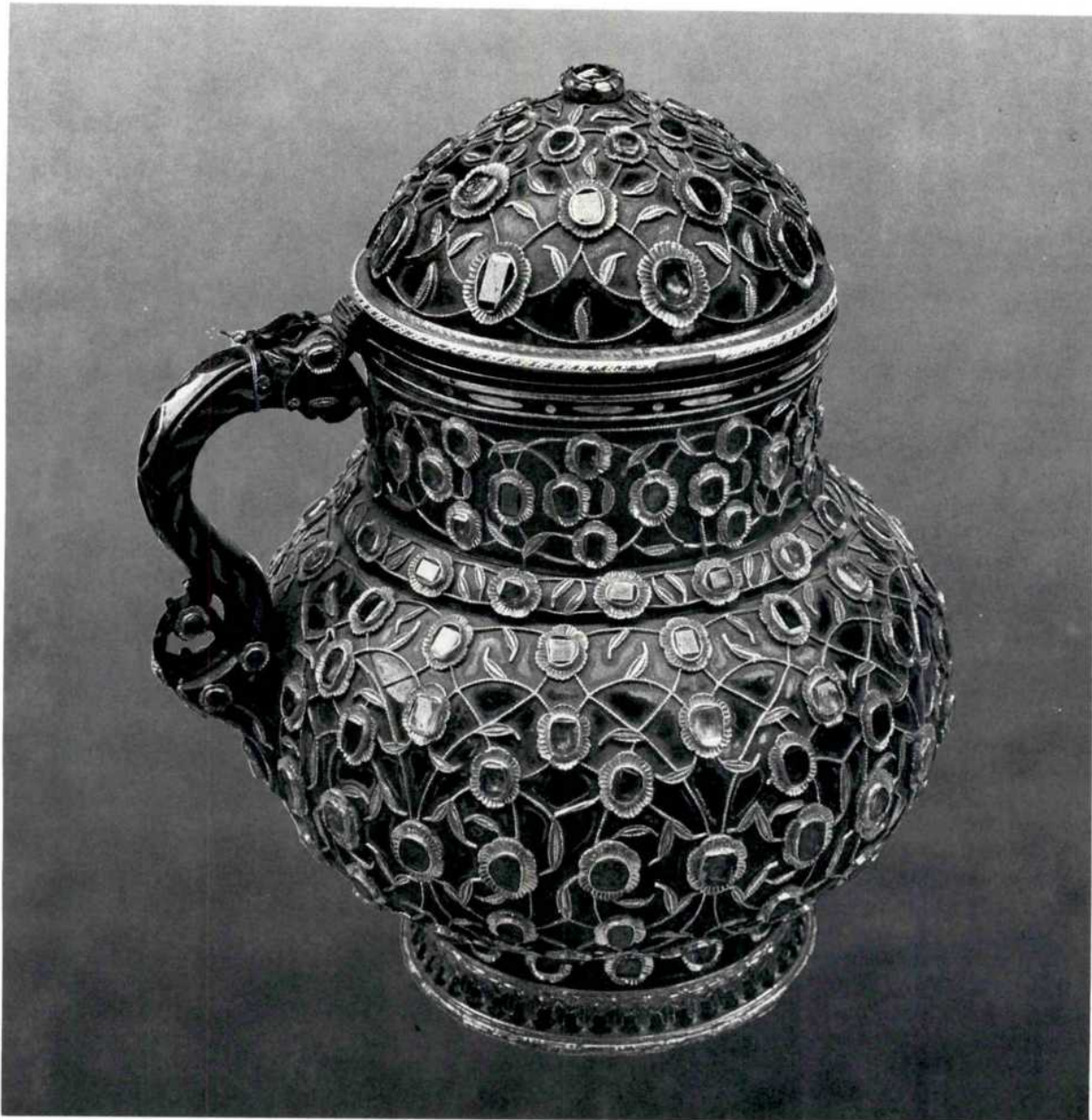
Jade plaques engraved with religious inscriptions and intended as amulets to be worn around the neck are not uncommon in Turkey, Persia, Central Asia, and the Indian subcontinent. These were carved in polygonal shapes with lobed or ogival outlines. From the sixteenth century, small plaques of a similar form, decorated with gold inlay and encrusted with jewels, were supplied to the Ottoman court. These were used as decorative appliques on quivers, mirror backs, and vessels of gold. An appliqué plaque in the British Museum shows very clearly the technique used in this style of decoration (figure 10). Tiny collars of gold were fixed to the surface of the jade and into these were secured the precious stones to suggest flowers. These "flowers" were then joined by leafy stems laid on the prepared grooved lines.

Similar jade appliques decorate a quiver in the Treasury of the Topkapi Saray Museum. This is made of gold cloth embroidered with pearls (figure 11) and probably dates from the seventeenth century.³² A gold ceremonial flask in the Treasury of the Topkapi Saray Museum is based on the shape of a leathern water flask and is a fine example of the skill of the Turkish goldsmith (figure 12). Jewel-encrusted jade plaques are inset on the front and sides of the vessel. This kind of flask is depicted in miniatures of Turkish chronicles of 1566-1590, where it is carried by the Master of the Wardrobe and contains the sultan's drinking water. The flask in the Treasury can be dated to *circa* 1560-1565.³³

These examples show the difference in treatment between that of the Ottoman jade carvers and Ulugh Beg's jade carvers. While the latter concentrated on form and restricted decoration to the minimum, Turkish jade carvers were unrestrained in their application of surface embellishment. This can be seen in a lidded jug in the Treasury identical in form with those of Ulugh Beg, though heavily encrusted with gold and jewels (figure 13). The jug has often been described as made of black jade but it is now considered to be of obsidian used as a jade simulant.³⁴

Another inlay technique which appealed to Ottoman taste was the form of gold inlay already discussed with the jades of the late Timurid and early Safavid period. This consisted of foliate scrolls and arabesques which were first engraved on the jade surface and then inlaid in gold in such a manner that the finished inlay was flush with the jade surface. The decoration of a small dark green bowl in the Treasury (figure 14) combines the two techniques, encrustation and plain inlay. The bowl is further embellished with gold handles and a rim of gold repoussé.³⁵

Following the Timurid, Safavid, and Ottoman periods, the tradition of Islamic jade working was continued in Mughal India.



13. Lidded Jug, Probably of Obsidian, with Gold Inlay and Encrustation of Jewels. Ottoman. Sixteenth century. Height: 19 centimetres. Photograph: courtesy the Treasury of the Topkapi Saray Museum, Istanbul.



14. Bowl of Dark Green Jade with Gold Inlay and Applied Gold and Enamelled Handles and Gold Band on Rim. Ottoman. C. 1550-1600. Diameter: 15 centimetres. Photograph: courtesy the Treasury of the Topkapi Saray Museum, Istanbul.

NOTES

1. *Kitab al-babth*, a treatise on the philosophical justification of talismans by Jabir B. Hayyan, the Arab alchemist who flourished in the second half of the eighth century. Selections in Paul Kraus, *Essai sur l'histoire scientifique dans l'Islam* (Cairo, 1935), vol. 1, pp. 501-527.
2. V. Minorsky, trans., *Hudud al-'Alam – The Regions of the World*, a Persian geography, AH 372/AD 982 (London, 1937), p. 86.
3. Krenkow, ed., *Kitab al-Jamahir fi ma'rifat al-jawahir* of Abu Raihan Muhammad B. Ahmad al-Biruni (Hyderabad, AH 1355/AD 1936-37), p. 198f.
4. Antonio Raineri Biscia, trans., *Fior di Pensieri sulla Pietre Preziose di Ahmed Tellascite*, 2nd ed. (Bologna, 1906), p. 114.
5. Chavannes, ed., "Notes additionnelles sur les Tou-Kiue (Turcs) occidentaux," *T'oung Pao*, 5 (Leiden, 1904), p. 32.
6. E. V. Bretschneider, "Record of an Embassy to the Regions in the West," *Chinese Recorder*, VI (1875), p. 5.
7. Al-Khazraji, *History of the Resuli Dynasty of Yemen*, trans., Sir J. W. Redhouse, Gibb Memorial Series, III (Leiden-London, 1906-1918), vol. 1, p. 274.
8. Al-Khazraji, *History of the Resuli*, p. 279.
9. Zahiruddin Muhammad Babur, *Babur-nama*, trans., Annette Susannah Beveridge (London, 1922), p. 79.
10. Babur, *Babur-nama*, p. 80.
11. E. V. Bretschneider, *Mediaeval Researches from Eastern Sources* (London, 1910), vol. 2, p. 263.
12. Thomas W. Lentz and Glenn D. Lowry, *Princely Vision: Persian Art and Culture in the Fifteenth Century*, Los Angeles Museum of Art and Arthur Sackler Gallery (Los Angeles/Washington DC, 1989), p. 224 and cat. no. 124.
13. The most comprehensive study is that of M. E. Masson, "Tretii Kusok nefritovogo namogil'nika Timura," *Epigrafika Vostoka*, 2 (1948).
14. A. U. Pope, ed., *A Survey of Persian Art*, vol. IV (London, 1938-9), pl. 1458 B.
15. Robert Skelton, "Islamic and Mughal Jades," *Jade*, Roger Keverne, ed. (London, 1991), fig. 15 and p. 282f; Ernst Grube, "Notes on the Decorative Arts of the Timurid Period, II," *Islamic Art*, III, (Geneva/New York, 1988-89), fig. 38B.
16. Lentz and Lowry, *Princely Vision*, p. 48, cat. no. 10.
17. Lentz and Lowry, *Princely Vision*, p. 224, cat. no. 125.
18. The earliest of these is dated 1461-1462; see Assadullah Souren Melikian-Chirvani, *Islamic Metalwork from the Iranian World 8th-9th centuries*, Victoria and Albert Museum Catalogue (London, 1982), no. 109, pp. 248-250 (for other examples, see Lentz and Lowry, *Princely Vision*, p. 161, cat. no. 57; p. 190 cat. no. 88; p. 206. nos. 109, 110; p. 273, cat. nos. 151, 152).
19. A. Rogers and H. Beveridge, *Tuzuk-i-Jahangiri*, trans., (London, 1909), 1, p. 146.
20. Grube, "Notes on the Decorative Arts," fig. 11.
21. H-J. Schubnel, *Pièrres Precieuses Gemmes & Objets d'Art de la Galerie de Minéralogie du Muséum*, *Revue de Gemmologie -Numero hors. Serie – Juin 1977*, Paris; see under 'coupes de Louis XIV', A. 46.
22. Lentz and Lowry, *Princely Vision*, p. 161, cat. no. 57.
23. Lentz and Lowry, *Princely Vision*, p. 143, cat. no. 50.
24. Lentz and Lowry, *Princely Vision*, p. 210, fig. 71; p. 211, fig. 75.
25. Lentz and Lowry, *Princely Vision*, p. 272, cat. no. 150.
26. Lentz and Lowry, *Princely Vision*, p. 228, cat. no. 130.
27. Melikian, *Islamic Metalwork*, a tinned copper dish dated 1496-1497, no. 110, pp. 250-52 and a wine bucket of bell-metal dated 'late 15th century', no. 115, pp. 256f.
28. Lentz and Lowry, *Princely Vision*, p. 237, cat. no. 146; p. 268-69, cat. no. 148.
29. R. Skelton, "The Relations between the Chinese and Indian Jade Carving Traditions," *The Western Influence of the Chinese Arts* (London: Percival David Foundation, 1972), pl. 26c.
30. *Survey of Persian Art*, pl. 1458.
31. Translated and expanded by J. M. Rogers, *The Topkapi Saray Museum: The Treasury*, from the original Turkish by Cengiz Koseoglu (Boston, 1987), p. 52.
32. *The Topkapi Saray Museum*, no. 42.
33. *The Topkapi Saray Museum*, no. 49.
34. *The Topkapi Saray Museum*, no. 50.
35. *The Topkapi Saray Museum*, no. 58.

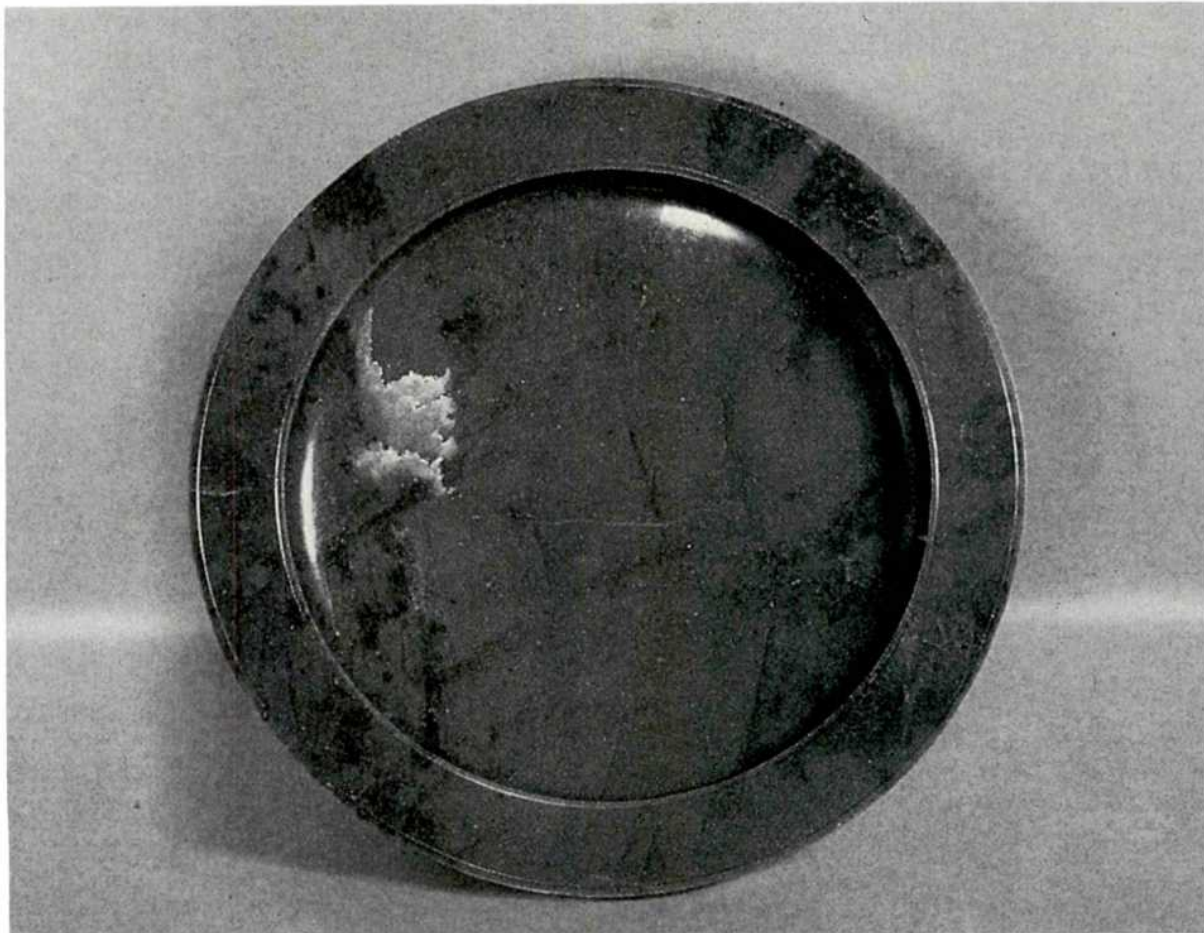
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Inception and Maturation in Mughal Jades

Stephen Markel

MUGHAL jades, apart from contemporary architectural embellishment, were the primary form of sculptural expression in northern India during the seventeenth through nineteenth centuries. Surviving in greater numbers than any other type of decorative art object from the Mughal period,¹ exquisite drinking and dining vessels, weapon hilts, and various other luxury items were carved, or more accurately, laboriously abraded and polished, from blocks of nephrite jade imported from Central Asia.

The stylistic evolution of early Mughal jades in the late sixteenth and seventeenth centuries reflects the individual tastes and aesthetic sensibilities of the four ruling emperors, in the same manner that painting and architecture received varying emphasis and direction under these mighty Mughal monarchs. Only a few jades survive from the



1. Salver. North India, Mughal. C. 1575-1600. Dark green nephrite; 41.1 centimetres. Cleveland Museum of Art, 76.73. Photograph: courtesy Cleveland Museum of Art. This footed salver and the plate in fig. 2 replicate, in jade the porcelain dishes exported from China to the Islamic world, such as that shown in fig. 3.



2. Plate. North India, Mughal. C. 1575-1600. Dark green nephrite; 24.1 centimetres. National Museum, New Delhi, 58.14/43. Photograph: Stephen Markel.

3. Salver. China, Ming, Xuande period (?). C. 1426-1435. White porcelain with cobalt blue underglaze decoration; 43.5 centimetres. Idemitsu Museum of Arts, Tokyo, 5954. Photograph: courtesy Idemitsu Museum of Arts. Inscribed on reverse: "On 3 Rabi I year IV of the reign, corresponding to A.H. 1072 [27 October 1661], inspected. Value: Rs. 700." Additional inscriptions: *tabvils* (certifications of conveyance to a new official), and a Devanagari inventory record.

reign of Akbar (r. 1556-1605) and it is not until the reigns of the two great aesthetes of the dynasty, Jahangir (r. 1605-1627), and, particularly, Shah Jahan (r. 1628-1658), that the art-form achieved its full development. Jade artefacts continued to be produced under Aurangzeb (r. 1658-1707), but late in his rule suffered a decline in artistic inspiration and execution, leading ultimately to the stereotyped forms of the late eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. Given the substantial number, technical sophistication, and imperial patronage of early Mughal jades, they clearly warrant serious art historical consideration.

THE PARADOX OF MUGHAL JADES

Anyone attempting even a casual perusal of the late sixteenth and seventeenth-century Mughal historical sources relating to jades is immediately struck by a peculiar paradox. Curiously, the official Mughal court histories and imperial memoirs prior to Aurangzeb's reign reveal an almost total lack of references specifically mentioning jade or jade objects.² This is in stark contrast to the numerous surviving jade objects that were produced for the Mughal court and the various descriptive accounts by visiting Europeans attesting the existence and popularity of jade and jade objects.

How is one to rectify this dearth of literary notice with the plentitude of extant jade objects and the European accounts? Especially since daggers and swords, presumably often fitted with jade hilts, are with gem stones and jewellery the most frequently mentioned as items of presentation by or to the emperors, and that trade caravans are known to have regularly arrived in Mughal India from Central Asia and China conveying jade and other foreign treasures.³

The answer may lie in the nature of how jade was used by the Mughals. Jade served a widely versatile function analogous to that of clay in ancient and rural societies or



4. Detail of Folio from the *Baburnama*, Showing *Babur Entertained by Badi-uz-Zaman-Mirza in the Jahan Ara Garden in Herat* [in 1506-1507]. North India, Mughal. C. 1593. Opaque water-colour and gold on paper, 26.4 x 5.3 centimetres (overall). The Museum of Oriental Art, Moscow, 577 II. Photograph: After *The Museum of Oriental Art, Moscow* (Leningrad: Aurora Art Pubs., 1988), p. 187, no. 195. Large dark green serving dishes, such as those shown here, are occasionally depicted in Mughal paintings and presumably represent vessels made of jade.

plastic in modern times. As such, perhaps its very commonality caused it simply to be overlooked by court historians and biographers, for it was the "object" of presentation rather than its specific "medium" that was considered significant to record for posterity.⁴

Furthermore, one must remember that Mughal court historians, like those in the service of other Muslim dynasties, were not recording the imperial events and activities for the sake of future art historians. Rather, they were entrusted with chronicling and promoting the glory of the emperor and the empire. Thus, when we read of the extravagant jewelled daggers recorded as presentation objects in the Mughal courts, it must be assumed on the basis of the extant examples that many of these daggers had jade hilts and that the historians simply did not specify the medium of the hilts, just as they did not bother to record that the blades were often made of the finest watered steel forged in Damascus, Syria.⁵

Yet, this interpretation of "commonplace usage", by its very nature, calls into question the traditional view that the salutatory poetic inscriptions found on Jahangir's wine cups,⁶ which constitute the majority of such epigraphs, are merely indicative of the rarity of jade during the period. Rather, when taken as a corpus, the inscriptions on the cups stress the glory of the contents as well as that of the container. This is a particularly telling point considering Jahangir's well-known fondness for intoxicants. A perhaps more accurate appraisal of these inscriptions is that only certain, particularly favoured objects used personally by Jahangir and Shah Jahan, such as wine cups for the former or thumb rings and drinking vessels for the abstinent latter, were graced with the honorific epigraphs.

To conclude with the subject of inscriptions on Mughal jades, it seems that by the late seventeenth century the practice of inscribing jades had gone out of fashion, as inscribed jades made during the reign of Aurangzeb date only from the early years of his rule. Accordingly, it may be illuminating to note an observation made by the seventeenth-century French jewel merchant, Jean-Baptiste Tavernier, that Aurangzeb "cares little for [precious and semiprecious] stones and loves gold and silver much better".⁷

JADES UNDER AKBAR

The existence of works of jade dating from the reign of Akbar may be inferred through the well-known visit to the imperial court in 1563 of a Central Asian jade merchant, Khwaja Mu'in, who was the overseer at the main jade-bearing river in Kashgar.⁸ Significant also in this regard is the account of an English merchant befriended by Jahangir, William Hawkins, who reported that in 1609 the royal treasury at Agra contained some twenty-five kilogrammes of uncut jade and five hundred drinking cups, that included fifty elaborate ones made of a single piece of jade or other precious minerals, a substantial number of which were likely to have been made during Akbar's reign which had ended only four years earlier.⁹

Surprisingly, however, only a few extant Mughal jades can be plausibly attributed to the reign of Akbar. These works share the stylistic characteristics of thick vessel walls, a generally stout form and heavy features, and rudimentary ornamentation, if any. Two other stylistic traits also suggest an early date, although neither is in itself conclusive. First, the archaic imitation of the traditional shapes of Timurid or Chinese metal or ceramic vessels coupled with the absence of floral forms or decoration, a style which was also continued through the early years of Jahangir's reign. Second, the use of dark green jade, as opposed to the pale green shades of jade popular under Jahangir and the white jade favoured especially during the reign of Shah Jahan that paralleled the emperor's preference for white marble as an architectural medium.

On the basis of these foregoing stylistic characteristics, two previously unpublished jade vessels with these same distinctive features can also be attributed to the reign of Akbar: a large dark green jade footed salver in the Cleveland Museum of Art (figure 1) and a dark green jade plate in the National Museum, New Delhi (figure 2).¹⁰ Both dishes replicate the forms of Chinese porcelain dishes known to have been avidly collected and used by several of the Mughal emperors,¹¹ such as a Ming salver inscribed with a Mughal inventory notice dated 1661 in the fourth year of Aurangzeb's reign (figure 3).¹²



5. Archer's Thumb Ring of Salim. North India, Allahabad, Mughal. C. 1599-1604. White nephrite with red pigment, formerly inlaid with gem stones set in gold; 4.5 x 3.2 centimetres. Bharat Kala Bhavan, Varanasi, 3/5718. Photograph: Stephen Markel. Inscribed with the name Shah Salim [Jahangir's pre-regnal name]. This is the earliest known inscribed Mughal jade. It was originally graced with a Safavid-inspired arabesque in gold and gem stones.

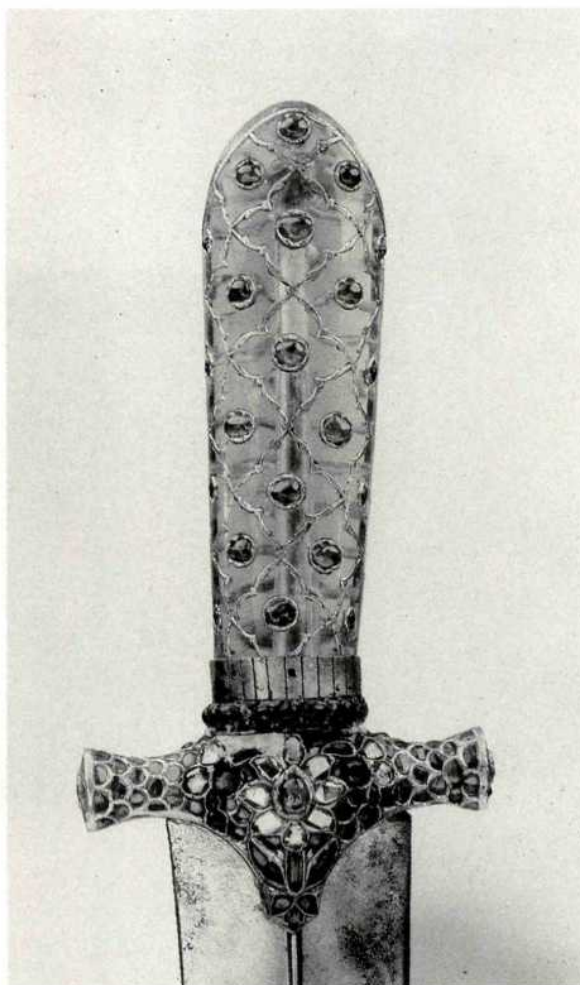
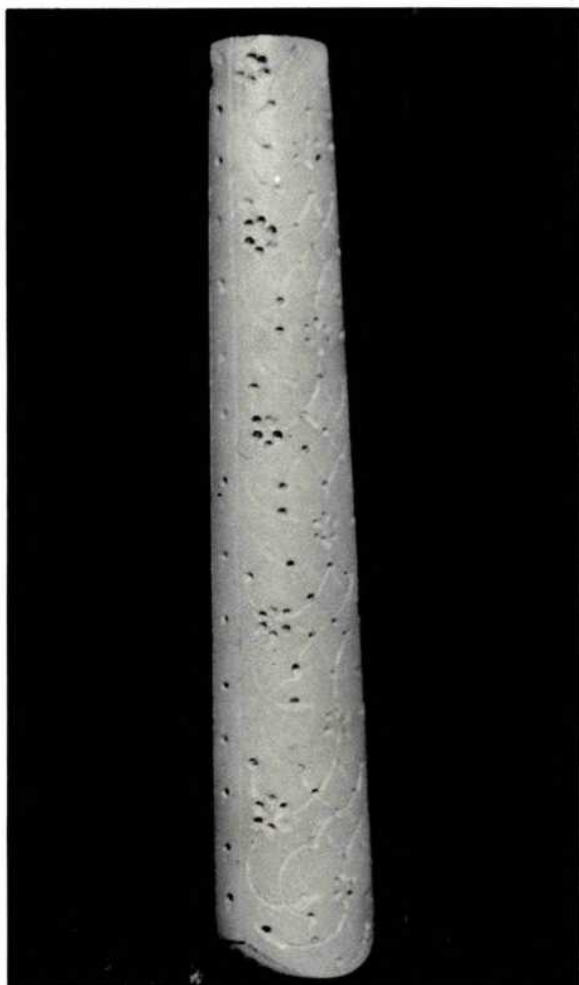
6. Wine Cup of Jahangir. North India, Mughal. 1612-1613. Fine-grained dark green hardstone (quartz and chromian muscovite); 7.3 x 12.2 centimetres. Museum of Art, Rhode Island School of Design, Providence. Helen M. Danforth Fund, 84.163. Photograph: courtesy Rhode Island School of Design. Inscribed with the name Jahangir, the date AH 1021, and numerous poetic verses (see Markel, "Inscribed Works," pp. 26-27).

Similar green serving dishes are occasionally shown in contemporary Mughal paintings, such as in this detail of a folio from the *Baburnama* from *circa* 1593 showing the first Mughal emperor Babur (r. 1526-1530) at a garden feast in Herat (figure 4).¹³ The green serving platters depicted in the painting presumably represent tableware made of dark green jade, as they distinctly differ from the light green tableware with formed side walls and covers shown in various Mughal paintings which might be interpreted as being East Asian green celadon ware.¹⁴ However, no such celadons have yet been discovered in a Mughal context.

The Cleveland salver and New Delhi plate can be compared with a well-known small dark green jade jar belonging to The Guennol Collection, currently on loan to The Brooklyn Museum, which may have functioned as an ink-well¹⁵ and has been attributed to *circa* 1575-1600.¹⁶ Indeed, when compared with Jahangir's ink-well dated 1618-1619, now in The Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York,¹⁷ the formative nature of the Guennol jar is apparent through its less developed form and decoration.

JADES UNDER JAHANGIR

The initial Akbari examples notwithstanding, it took the enlightened artistic genius and patronage of Jahangir for the production of Mughal jades to begin in earnest. The earliest extant inscribed Mughal jade is a well-known archer's thumb ring, now in the Bharat Kala Bhavan, Varanasi (figure 5). The ring is inscribed on the inner face with the name "Shah Salim", which is generally interpreted as referring to Jahangir while still a prince, since his given, pre-regnal, name was Sultan Salim. The white jade ring was once



7. Knife Handle. North India, Mughal. *C.* 1610-1620. Pale green nephrite jade, formerly inlaid with gem stones set in gold; 8.6 x 1.6 x 1.3 centimetres. National Museum, New Delhi, 45.15/8. Photograph: Stephen Markel. This elegant jade handle of a small knife (*kard*) was once enriched with gem stones set in a gold lattice-work of cusped quatrefoils.

8. Dagger Hilt. North India, Mughal. Early seventeenth century. Rock crystal hilt inlaid with gem stones set in gold, gold quillon inlaid with gem stones, steel blade; 33.7 centimetres (overall). The Hermitage Museum, St Petersburg, OP-5287. Photograph: After A. A. Ivanov et al. *Oriental Jewellery. From the Collection of the State Treasury, the State Hermitage Oriental Department* (Moscow: Art, 1984), no. 112.

inlaid with gold and set with gem stones in an incised floral arabesque pattern recalling Safavid designs and lapidary technique.

Salim's ring can be generally dated to *circa* 1600 on the basis of the name of Salim and the style of decoration. The use of the title "Shah" indicates further that it was made during the period of Salim's revolt against his father Akbar between the second half of the year 1599 and November 1604, when he set up his own independent court at Allahabad, assumed the title of "Shah" (King), produced several illustrated manuscripts, and reportedly even issued his own coins. The paintings produced for Salim in Allahabad frequently exhibit a distinct Iranian flavour due to the influence and guidance of the Safavid master Aqa Riza, who was the leading artist and director of an atelier which included painters, calligraphers, architects, masons, and, apparently, lapidaries.¹⁸ Taken together, the use of the title "Shah" and the Persianate ornamentation of the thumb ring suggest that it was made for Salim in Allahabad between 1599 and 1604, perhaps in honour of his declared independence.¹⁹

Furthermore, even though Salim's thumb ring was technically created during the reign of Akbar, its close association with Salim/Jahangir and its vastly different style of ornamentation compared to the aforementioned jades attributed to Akbar's reign preclude it from being very helpful in further determining the general stylistic characteristics of Akbari jades. Rather, its importance lies more in its ability to enhance our understanding of Jahangir's aesthetic sensibilities and the evolution of jades produced under his patronage.

The earliest surviving Mughal jades which bear dated dedicatory inscriptions were



9. Pen-nub Dryer (?) of Jahangir. North India, Mughal. 1626-1627. White nephrite, silver mounts and black pigment; 6.2 x 1.5 centimetres. Prince of Wales Museum of Western India, Bombay, 66.18. Photograph: courtesy Prince of Wales Museum of Western India. Inscribed with the name Jahangir and the date AH 1036. The suggested function given in the title for this object accords with the official record of the Prince of Wales Museum and was originally suggested by Rai Krishnadasa. Many writers, including the present one, now follow Robert Skelton in believing that it was a perfume phial.

10. Dagger Hilt. North India, Mughal. C. 1625. White and dark green nephrite; 11 x 5.1 centimetres. Bharat Kala Bhavan, Varanasi, 3/5741. Photograph: Stephen Markel. This striking two-tone dagger hilt fashioned in the form of a blossoming iris flower and leafy stem is unusual for Mughal jades which, unlike Chinese jades, virtually always feature a uniform colour of the stone.

created for Jahangir within two years of the beginning of his reign. As is well known, Jahangir actively collected fifteenth-century Timurid and Chinese vessels and had them inscribed with his titles and poetic verses. The jade wine cups made early in his reign consciously imitated the forms of these earlier metal and ceramic vessels, as is evident from the jade-like wine cup now in the Rhode Island School of Design (figure 6). It is inscribed with Jahangir's name, a date corresponding to 1612-1613, and several poetic verses in praise of the emperor and the cup itself. Fashioned from fine-grained quartz and chromian muscovite rather than nephrite jade, the cup is a rare example of an early Mughal jade simulant. The form of the cup is borrowed from sixteenth-century Ming dynasty Chinese porcelain vessels.²⁰

Although Jahangir's early inscribed jades are extremely interesting and crucial for an understanding of the development of Mughal jade carving, they are well known and frequently published. Therefore, in lieu of duplicating earlier efforts,²¹ a previously unpublished jade that may also be attributed to the early years of Jahangir's reign will now be discussed.

Fashioned of pale green jade and once inlaid with gold and precious gem stones in an elegant arabesque, a small knife handle in the National Museum, New Delhi (figure 7), is carved in the Iranian style of hilt typically found on an Indo-Islamic straight-bladed dagger known as a *kard*. A close parallel for the decoration of the hilt can be found on numerous contemporary rock crystal dagger hilts inlaid with a similar bejewelled arabesque, such as an early seventeenth-century example now in The Hermitage Museum, St Petersburg (figure 8).²²

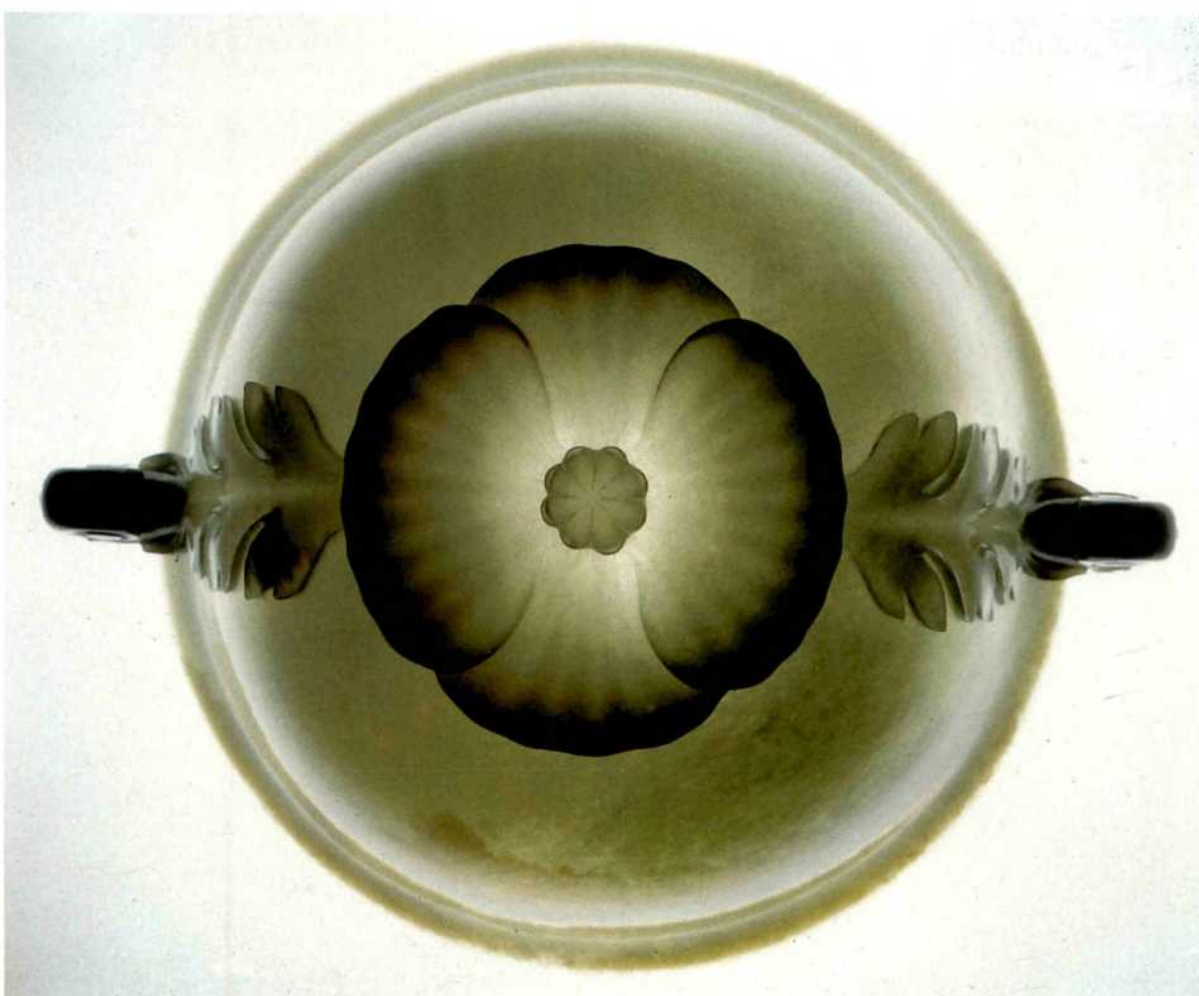
Late in the reign of Jahangir, presumably after his inspiring visit in the spring of 1620 to the lush flower-filled valleys of Kashmir, an innovative and refined style of jade carving began to appear that featured floral and vegetal forms in place of the prototypical shapes derived from ceramics and metalware. This floral style of Jahangiri jades is best exemplified by a small inscribed perfume phial or pen-nub dryer made in the shape of a flower bud, which is dated 1626-1627 and is now in the Prince of Wales Museum of Western India, Bombay (figure 9), and by a contemporary two-tone jade dagger hilt in the form of a flowering iris with foliate stem now in the Bharat Kala Bhavan, Varanasi (figure 10). Although of a completely radical appearance compared with Jahangir's jades previously discussed, even without the inscription on the perfume phial, the attribution of these two works to a late period in the emperor's reign would remain discernible through their powerful forms and bold carving while their floral conception indicates a date no earlier than *circa* 1620-1625.

JADES UNDER SHAH JAHAN

As accomplished as Jahangir's jades are, it was during the reign of his successor Shah Jahan that the full artistic potential of the medium was realized. Mature Shah Jahani jades are characterized by a sophistication of technique and an elegance of form unknown in works created for his father. Some time shortly before the middle of the seventeenth century, Shah Jahan's jades began to display a more delicate manner of execution that allowed for an even greater subtlety of form and motif.

Shah Jahan's jade artisans continued the use of floral imagery begun under Jahangir and increased its utilization throughout the entire spectrum of the arts produced for him. An exquisite spinach green jade bowl probably dating from *circa* 1640-1650, now in the Los Angeles County Museum of Art (figures 11a,b), is a superb example of the delicate workmanship and refinement of Shah Jahani works of jade from this period, but has yet to achieve the extraordinary finesse of carving found on vessels created closer to the end of the emperor's reign.

Shah Jahan's artists also augmented the choice of motifs derived from the world of nature, especially the dagger hilts fashioned in the form of animal heads, which, as far as it is known, first appear in Mughal painting in *circa* 1610-1615.²³ Perhaps the most powerful representation of the genre is a well-known hilt that portrays a nilgai, the slate-blue wild buck antelope of India (figure 12). Dating probably from the same decade as the jade bowl and now in The Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York, the sensitivity of the rendering of the antelope's head, lily blossoms, and acanthus leaves epitomizes Shah Jahani jade carving.



11a. Bowl. North India, Mughal. C. 1640-1650. Spinach green nephrite; 5.7 x 15.9 centimetres. Los Angeles County Museum of Art, From the Nasli and Alice Heeramaneck Collection, Museum Associates Purchase, M. 76.2.2. Photograph: courtesy LACMA (Steve Oliver). The ultra-smooth finish and sophisticated craftsmanship of this vessel typify Mughal jade working at its finest.

11b. Detail of Base. This dramatic view shows the translucency and modelling of the delicately worked jade.

The quintessential articulation of the art-form under Shah Jahan is his renowned white jade drinking vessel dated 1656-1657 now in the Victoria and Albert Museum (V & A), London (figures 13a,b).²⁴ An indisputable masterpiece, this often-published cup harmoniously combines disparate stylistic elements derived from European, Chinese, and indigenous Indian artistic traditions.²⁵

Although this vessel is frequently singled out as the epitome of Mughal jade working, at least one other known vessel (and presumably additional, now perished ones), can rival it in elegance and technical virtuosity. Dating probably from the same period and perhaps even created by the same artist or workshop, the little-known white jade cup is in the National Palace Museum, Taipei (figures 14a,b).²⁶ The vessel is fashioned in the form of a lobed leaf, with foliate handles on the sides and a supporting foot replicating a raised lotus blossom with curled petals. Despite the obvious differences in design and motif between the two vessels — the Taipei cup terminates in a vegetal handle in place of the goat head of the V & A cup and the Taipei cup has long, tapering leaves on its underside instead of the acanthus leaves found on the V & A cup — the sublime quality of the carving of the lotus petals with their naturalistic venation and textured surface suggests an identical source of origin for the Taipei cup.

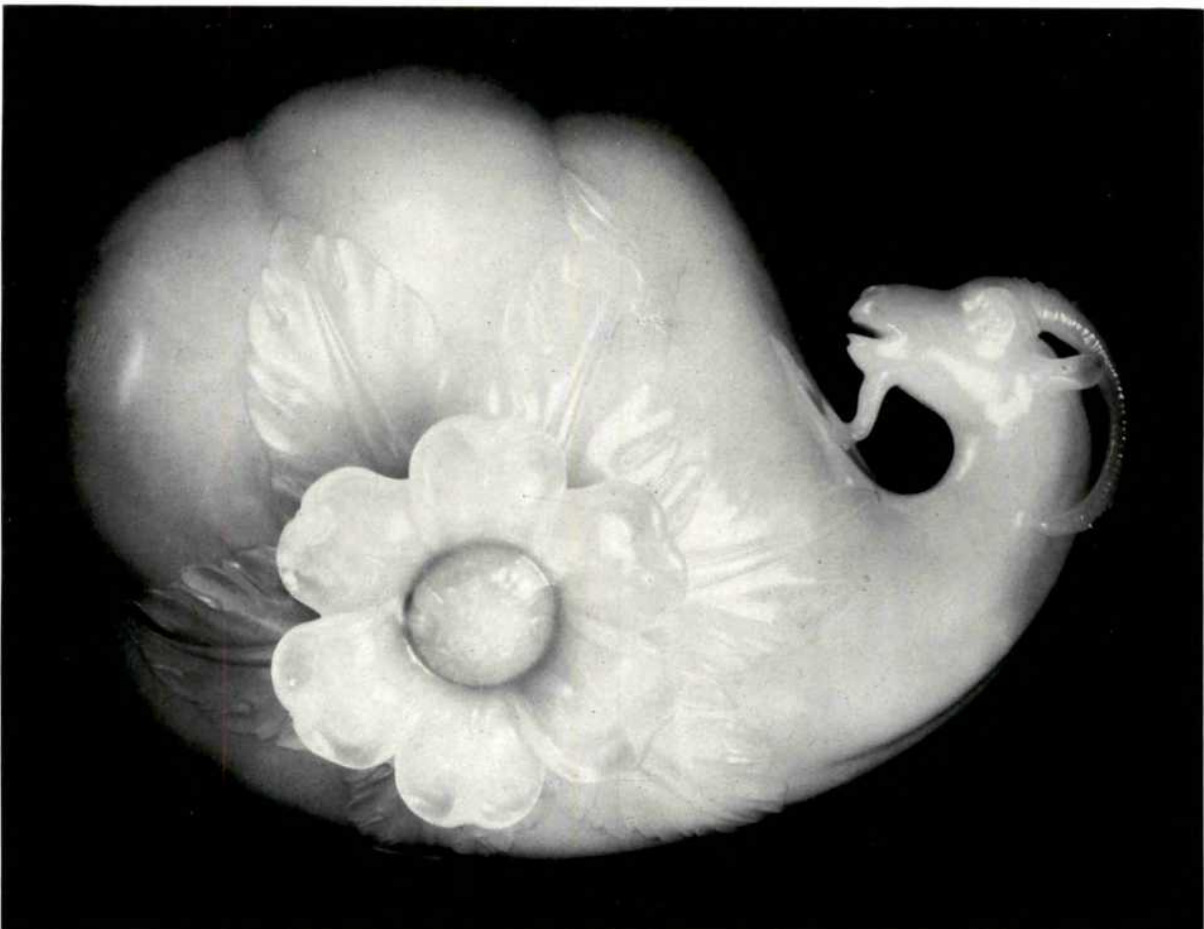
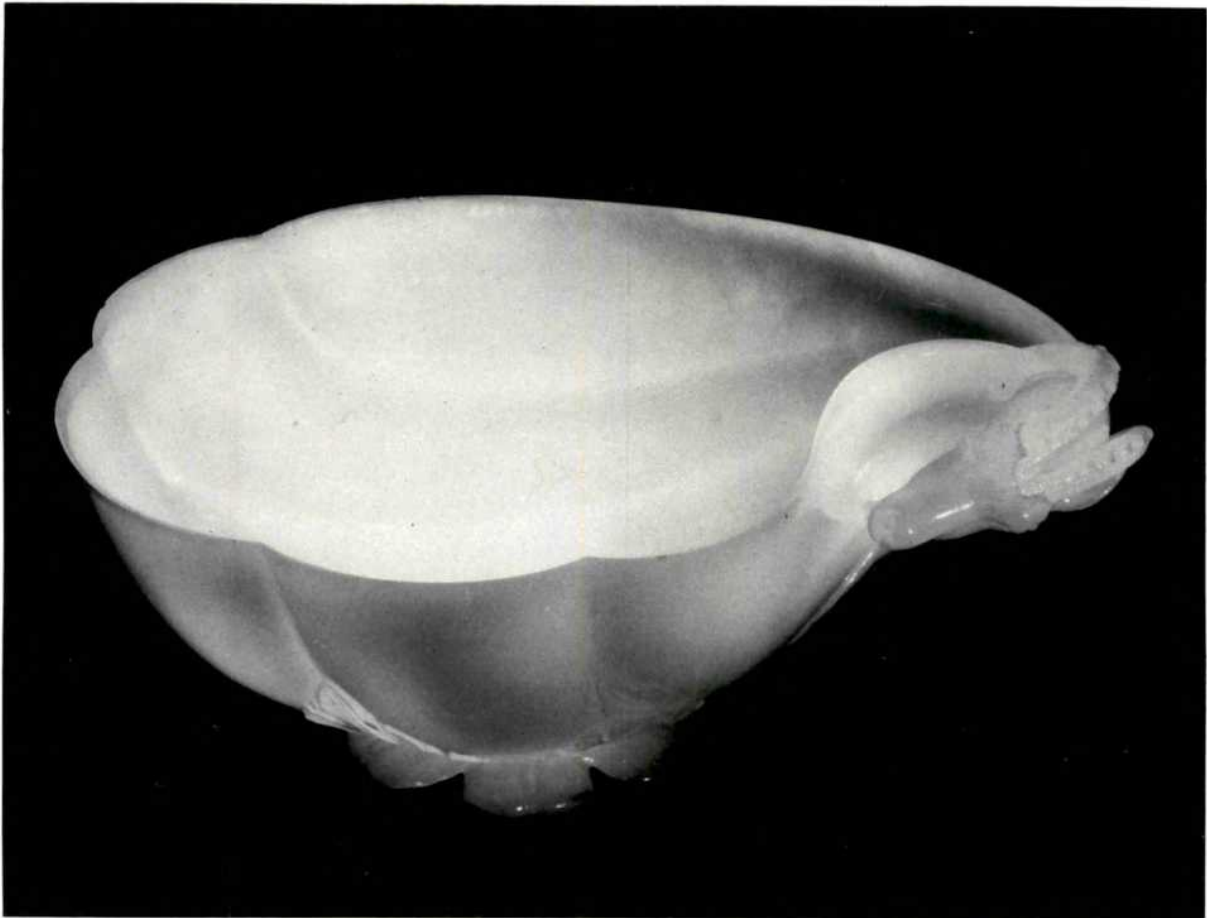
Many examples of similarly shaped vessels survive from later periods and perhaps even earlier,²⁷ but only these two Shah Jahani works exhibit such a mastery of form and sensitivity of expression.

JADES UNDER AURANGZEB

Early Aurangzebi jades closely follow the stylistic norms set by mature Shah Jahani works. The crucial difference between the start of Shah Jahan's patronage of jades and that of Aurangzeb's is that while Shah Jahan's artists purposely modified his father's style of jades to match his own personal taste, Aurangzeb's jade workers at first merely perpetuated the existing style.

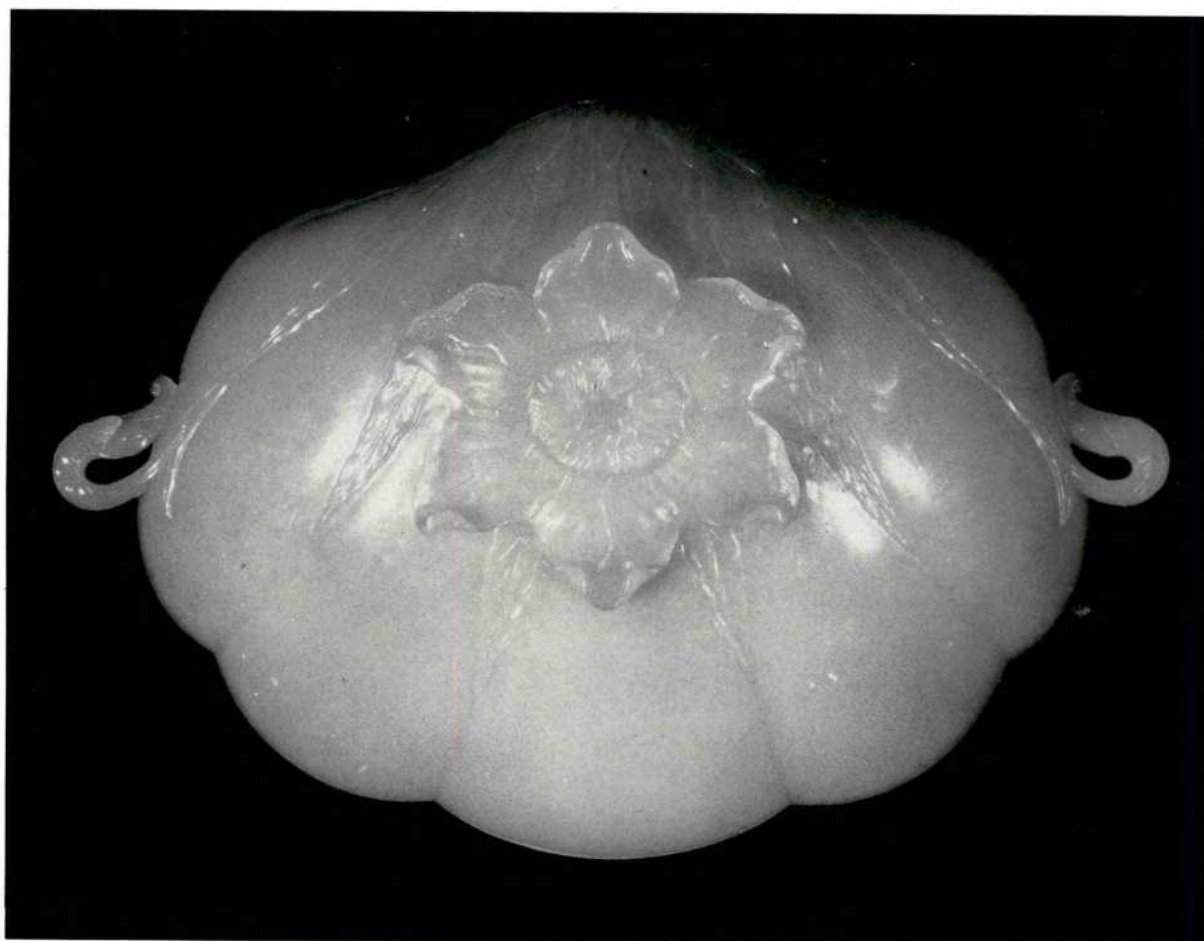


12. Dagger with Nilgai's Head Hilt. North India, Mughal. C. 1650. Dark gray-blue nephrite hilt, steel blade; 38.1 centimetres (overall). The Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York. The Alice and Nasli Heeramaneck Collection, Gift of Alice Heeramaneck, 1985, 1985.58a. Photograph: courtesy The Metropolitan Museum of Art. The deep gray-blue hue of this jade hilt is especially appropriate for representing a nilgai, the often hunted antelope of India whose coat is of a similar colour.



13a. Cup of Shah Jahan. North India, Mughal. 1656-1657. White nephrite; 6.4 x 18.7 x 14 centimetres. Victoria and Albert Museum, London, IS 12-1962. Photograph: courtesy Victoria and Albert Museum. Inscribed with the name of Shah Jahan and the date AH 1067. Perhaps created for Shah Jahan's grand darbar marking his third decade of rule, as suggested by Cary Welch, this well-known work of art represents the epitome of Mughal jades.

13b. Detail of Base.



14a. Cup. North India, Mughal. C. 1655-1660. White nephrite; 4.9 x 21 x 14 centimetres. National Palace Museum, Taipei. *T'ien* 312. Photograph: courtesy National Palace Museum. The style of modelling and delicacy of expression suggest that this jade may have been fashioned in the same workshop as the cup shown in figs. 13a,b.

14b. Detail of Base.



15. Detail of Dagger Hilt of Aurangzeb. North India, Mughal. 1660-1661. Pale green and burnt-orange nephrite hilt, steel blade inlaid with gold; 34.9 x 5.6 centimetres. Los Angeles County Museum of Art, From the Nasli and Alice Heeramaneck Collection, Museum Associates Purchase, M. 76.2.7a. Photograph: courtesy LACMA (Steve Oliver). Inscribed with the name of Alamgir (Aurangzeb) and the date AH 1071. The unusual shape of the mouth of the hilt accords precisely with the distinctive inlay pattern of the blade, thereby suggesting that the current hilt and blade are the original matching components and that the hilt can thus be assigned the same date as the inscribed blade. This attribution is also supported by the style of the hilt.



16. Dagger and Sheath. North India, Mughal. C. 1675-1700 (sheath fittings: C. 1800). White nephrite hilt and sheath fittings inlaid with gem stones set in gold, steel blade inlaid with gold, velvet covered wooden sheath; 42.9 x 7.6 x 2.9 centimetres (overall). Los Angeles County Museum of Art, From the Nasli and Alice Heeramaneck Collection, Museum Associates Purchase, M. 71.1.35a, b. Photograph: courtesy LACMA (Steve Oliver). Inscribed with a nonsensical "decorative" script. After the pristine style of ornamentation generally favoured during the reign of Shah Jahan, dagger hilts returned to the more ornate style of decoration with inlaid gem stones set in gold that was popular during Jahangir and Akbar's times.

In the light of the close stylistic similarities, it seems obvious that the jades made at the beginning of Aurangzeb's reign must have been made by the lapidaries employed by Shah Jahan, as is the case with a jade dagger hilt dated from the second year of Aurangzeb's reign now in the Los Angeles County Museum of Art (figure 15). Made of pale green jade with areas of burnt orange, the hilt is finely rendered in the form of a horse's head and neck. It is dated 1660-1661 by an inscription on the presumably contemporary blade that declares it to be the personal dagger of Alamgir (Aurangzeb).²⁸ The hilt is proportionally somewhat thinner than Shah Jahan's nilgai hilt, which also suggests a slightly later date.

Jades made later in the reign of Aurangzeb reintroduce the more ornate style of decoration with inlaid precious metals and gem stones that had been favoured under Jahangir, since the lapidary technique of inlaying costly stones was restricted to jewellery and architectural embellishment during the reign of Shah Jahan. This revived decorative fashion can be seen in numerous weapon hilts from the period, such as this opulent example dating from *circa* 1675-1700, now in the Los Angeles County Museum of Art (figure 16),²⁹ and also in a number of portraits of the emperor.³⁰ Significantly, a visiting European, François Bernier, writing in 1665, documented this fashion of embellishment by recording that contemporary jades were "inlaid with strings of gold, and enriched with precious stones".³¹

Another noteworthy feature of this dagger hilt is the design of its butt — hook-shaped with a rounded terminal — which was derived from the Western European-style of pistol butt used for pistol butts and sword hilts in the weaponry traditions of Ottoman Turkey and Safavid Iran.³² The pistol-butt hilt form was introduced into the Mughal artistic repertoire early in Aurangzeb's reign,³³ and may have inspired the creation of Indian dagger hilts made in the visually similar shape of a parrot's head.³⁴

By the end of Aurangzeb's long reign, works of jade had been standardized into the set forms on which the later eighteenth and nineteenth-century jades were patterned. Myriad examples from this period bear witness to the continued production of jade objects, and although superb jade working again effloresced in the late eighteenth century at the Awadh court of Lucknow,³⁵ it is the mid-seventeenth century that must ultimately be regarded as the zenith of Mughal jade working.

NOTES

1. The Mughals were Central Asian warriors who conquered northern India in the early sixteenth century to establish a mighty kingdom lasting until the mid-nineteenth century, which was visually characterized by such grand monuments as the Taj Mahal (1632-1643), and highly refined paintings and decorative arts.

2. Even the numerous notices of ornate vessels and bejewelled daggers mentioned in Jahangir's memoirs are remarkably silent in specifically mentioning jade, apart from a notable reference to a Timurid jade jug of Ulug Beg (1394-1449) that the emperor had inscribed with his name. See A. Rogers, H. Beveridge, trans. and ed., *The Tuzuk-i-Jahangiri* (1909-1914, 3rd edition, 2 vols. in one, Delhi: Munshiram Manoharlal, 1978), vol. 1, p. 146.

3. Described by François Bernier, a French physician and traveller in India in 1656-1668. See François Bernier, *Travels in the Mogul Empire A.D. 1656-1668*, trans. A. Constable (London: Oxford University Press, 1891; reprint of 2nd ed., Rev. V. A. Smith, New Delhi: Oriental Books Reprint, 1983), p. 426.

4. Mughal literary references often specify, for example, the presentation of a "jewelled" dagger or sword. This more detailed description of the object, however, should be regarded more as a proclamation of the extravagant value of the gift than just a report of its medium *per se*.

5. Detailed records of the Mughal ateliers have either perished or remain unpublished. Further research in this direction may yield fruitful results, especially the archival records stored in Bikaner of the former Rajasthani courts, such as Amber where Mughal lapidaries reportedly migrated in the late seventeenth century.

6. See Stephen Markel, "Fit for an Emperor: Inscribed Works of Decorative Art Acquired by the Great Mughals," *Oriental Art*, 21:8 (August 1990), pp. 22-36.

7. Jean-Baptiste Tavernier, *Travels in India by Jean-Baptiste Tavernier, Baron of Aubonne*, 2 vols., trans. V. Ball (2nd edition, W. Crooke, ed., London, 1925; reprint edition, New Delhi: Oriental Books, 1977), p. 111.

8. Abu-l-Fazl, *The Akbar Nama of Abu-l-Fazl*, 3 vols., trans. H. Beveridge (Calcutta: Asiatic Society, Bibliotheca Indica, 1897-1921; reprint ed., Delhi: Low Price Publications, 1989), vol. 2, pp. 300-303.

9. William Foster, ed., *Early Travels in India, 1583-1619* (London: Oxford University Press, 1921), pp. 102-103.

10. Compare also a dark green jade plate in Teng Shu-p'ing, *Catalogue of a Special Exhibition of Hindustan Jade in the National Palace Museum*, trans. D. M. Kamen, exh. cat. (Taipei: National Palace Museum, 1983), pp. 180-81, pl. 28; and a green platter shown in a Mughal painting from a *Bustan* of Sa'di manuscript dated 1605-1606 in Abolala Soudavar, *Art of the Persian Courts: Selections from the Art and History Trust Collection*, exh. cat. (New York: Rizzoli, 1992), p. 342 cat. 137 e.

11. Large porcelain serving platters were created by Chinese factories as export ware for the Middle Eastern markets because of the communal dining habits of the Muslim clientele. See John S. Guy, *Oriental Trade Ceramics in South-East Asia Ninth to Sixteenth Centuries* (Singapore: Oxford University Press, 1986), p. 28. For a discussion of such dishes acquired by the Mughal emperors, see Stephen Markel, "Jades, Jewels, and Objets d'Art," *Romance*

- of the *Taj Mahal*, exh. publication by Pratapaditya Pal et al (Los Angeles: Los Angeles County Museum of Art; London: Thames and Hudson, 1989), pp. 166-69 and Markel, "Inscribed Works," pp. 34-36.
12. *In Pursuit of the Dragon: Traditions and Transitions in Ming Ceramics* (Seattle: Seattle Art Museum, 1988), p. 79, cat. no. 19. Unpublished translation of the Mughal inscription by Wheeler M. Thackston, Harvard University.
 13. Detail of "Babur Entertained by Badi uz-Zaman-Mirza in the Jahan Ara Garden in Herat [in 1506-07]," *The Museum of Oriental Art, Moscow* (Leningrad: Aurora Art, 1988), p. 187, cat. no. 195. For the account in Babur's memoirs of this evening of entertainment, see A. S. Beveridge; trans. and ed., *The Babur-nama in English (Memoirs of Babur)* (London, 1922; reprint ed., London: Luzac, 1969), pp. 302-304.
 14. Light green vessels can be seen in a number of Mughal paintings. See, for example, Alice N. Heeramanek, *Masterpieces of Indian Painting: from the Former Collections of Nasli M. Heeramanek* (n.p.: By the author, 1984), pp. 175 and 195, pls. 143 and 163.
 15. *The Guennol Collection*, vol. 2 (New York: The Metropolitan Museum of Art, 1982), pp. 68-70.
 16. Michael Brand and Glenn D. Lowry, *Akbar's India: Art from the Mughal City of Victory*, exh. cat. (New York: The Asia Society Galleries, 1985), pp. 116 and 155, cat. no. 75.
 17. Stuart Cary Welch, *India: Art and Culture, 1300-1900*, exh. cat. (New York: The Metropolitan Museum of Art, 1985), p. 194, fig. 122.
 18. For a discussion of Salim's Allahabad studio, see Milo Cleveland Beach, *The Grand Mogul: Imperial Painting in India 1600-1660*, exh. cat. (Williamstown, Mass.: Sterling and Francine Clark Art Institute, 1978), pp. 17 and 33-41; and Asok Kumar Das, *Mughal Painting during Jahangir's Time* (Calcutta: The Asiatic Society, 1978), pp. 40-69.
 19. It is evident that Salim's thumb ring could not have been made in the primary centres of jade carving, such as Agra or Delhi, as the royal artists working there were still in the service of Akbar. This attribution to a sub-imperial workshop may also explain why the inscription on the thumb ring is cruder than is usual in imperial epigraphs.
 20. Compare the bowls in *Imperial Taste: Chinese Ceramics from the Percival David Foundation*, exh. cat. (London: Percival David Foundation of Chinese Art; Los Angeles: Los Angeles County Museum of Art, 1989), p. 67, cat. no. 37.
 21. See Markel, "Inscribed Works."
 22. Anatoli A. Ivanov et al., *Oriental Jewellery. From the Collection of the State Treasury, the State Hermitage Oriental Department* (Moscow: Art, 1984), cat. no. 112, pls. 180 and 181.
 23. For the earliest known painted representation of an animal-headed hilt, see the portrait of Jamal Khan Qarawul by Murad dating from c. 1610-1615 from the Kevorkian Album, the Metropolitan Museum of Art (acc. no. 55.121.10.29r), In Stuart Cary Welch et al., *The Emperors' Album: Images of Mughal India*, exh. cat. (New York: The Metropolitan Museum of Art, 1987), pp. 133-34, cat. no. 26. Perhaps the earliest extant animal hilt is a lion-headed jade hilt dated 1602 by an inscription inlaid in gold on the blade and recorded therein as the work of Saleh, now in the Salar Jung Museum, Hyderabad (acc. no. XLIX-328). However, as I have not been permitted to examine this weapon in person and because, if not for the inscription, the hilt would stylistically be dated to the mid-seventeenth century, its usefulness in this context remains doubtful. See M. L. Nigam, "The Mughal Jades of India," pp. 76 and 78; and G. N. Pant, "Indo-Islamic Arms and Armour," in *An Age of Splendour — Islamic Art in India*, Karl Khandalavala, ed. (Bombay: Marg Publications, 1983), p. 55, fig. 8.
 24. This jade vessel is traditionally identified as a wine cup on the basis of comparisons with Jahangir's vessels identified by inscription as wine cups. However, as Shah Jahan was a teetotaler except for a brief period of his life between 1616 and 1622, this vessel must have been used for other, non-alcoholic beverages. See Wayne E. Begley and Z. A. Desai, *The Shah Jahan Nama of Inayat Khan* (Delhi: Oxford University Press, 1990), pp. 6 and 9.
 25. See Robert Skelton, *The Shah Jahan Cup* (London: Victoria and Albert Museum, 1969).
 26. No dates were proposed for any object in the otherwise excellent catalogue of the exhibition in which the Taipei jade cup was first published. See Teng, *Hindustan Jade*, pp. 198-99, pl. 37.
 27. For a leaf-shaped white jade vessel generally attributed to c. 1625-1630 now in the Los Angeles County Museum of Art (acc. no. M. 76.2.1), see Markel, "Jades, Jewels," pp. 145-47, fig. 150; and Stephen Markel, "Carved Jades of the Mughal Period," *Arts of Asia*, 17: 6 (Nov-Dec 1987), p. 124, fig. 86. For a post-Shah Jahan era attribution of the vessel, see Robert Skelton, "Islamic and Mughal Jades," *Jade*, R. Keverne, ed. (London: Anness Pub., 1991), p. 287. Recent research by the present writer, however, suggests that the alternative possibility of an eighteenth-century Qianlong period Chinese origin for the Los Angeles vessel should not be excluded.
 28. For a discussion of the synchronism of the hilt and blade, see Markel, "Jades, Jewels," p. 155.
 29. The gold inscription on the blade is nonsensical and, thus, merely "decorative" (Simon Digby, personal communication to the writer, September 12, 1988).
 30. See, for example, the portrait of Aurangzeb hunting in the Chester Beatty Library, Dublin, (Ms. 11, no. 27), which was most recently published in Welch, *India*, pp. 268-269, figure 176.
 31. Bernier, *Travels in the Mogul Empire*, p. 423.
 32. For the Middle Eastern weapons, see, for example, Howard J. Ricketts, *Splendeur des armes orientales*, exh. cat., translated with additional information by Philippe Missillier (Paris: ACTE EXPO-EPAD, 1988); and Anthony North, *An Introduction to Islamic Arms* (Owings Mills, MD: Stemmer House).
 33. Cary Welch (*India*, p. 271) argues for a Deccani origin of this hilt form, while Susan Stronge favours a Mughal genesis (Mildred Archer et al., *Treasures from India: The Clive Collection at Powis Castle* (New York: The Meredith Press, 1987), p. 42, cat. no. 18). Both writers apparently disregard the European and Middle Eastern sources for the hilt form.
 34. For example, see an eighteenth-century North Indian dagger with a parrot's head hilt in The David Collection, Copenhagen (acc. no. 27-1977).
 35. For an example of the high quality of Lucknow jades, see an inscribed and inlaid jade sword hilt dated 1786-1787 in Ricketts, *armes orientales*, p. 133, cat. no. 221. For a survey of Lucknow decorative arts, see Stephen Markel, "An Indian Scabbard Chape in the Cincinnati Art Museum and Related Luxury Arts of Lucknow," *Arts of Asia*, March-April 1993, forthcoming.

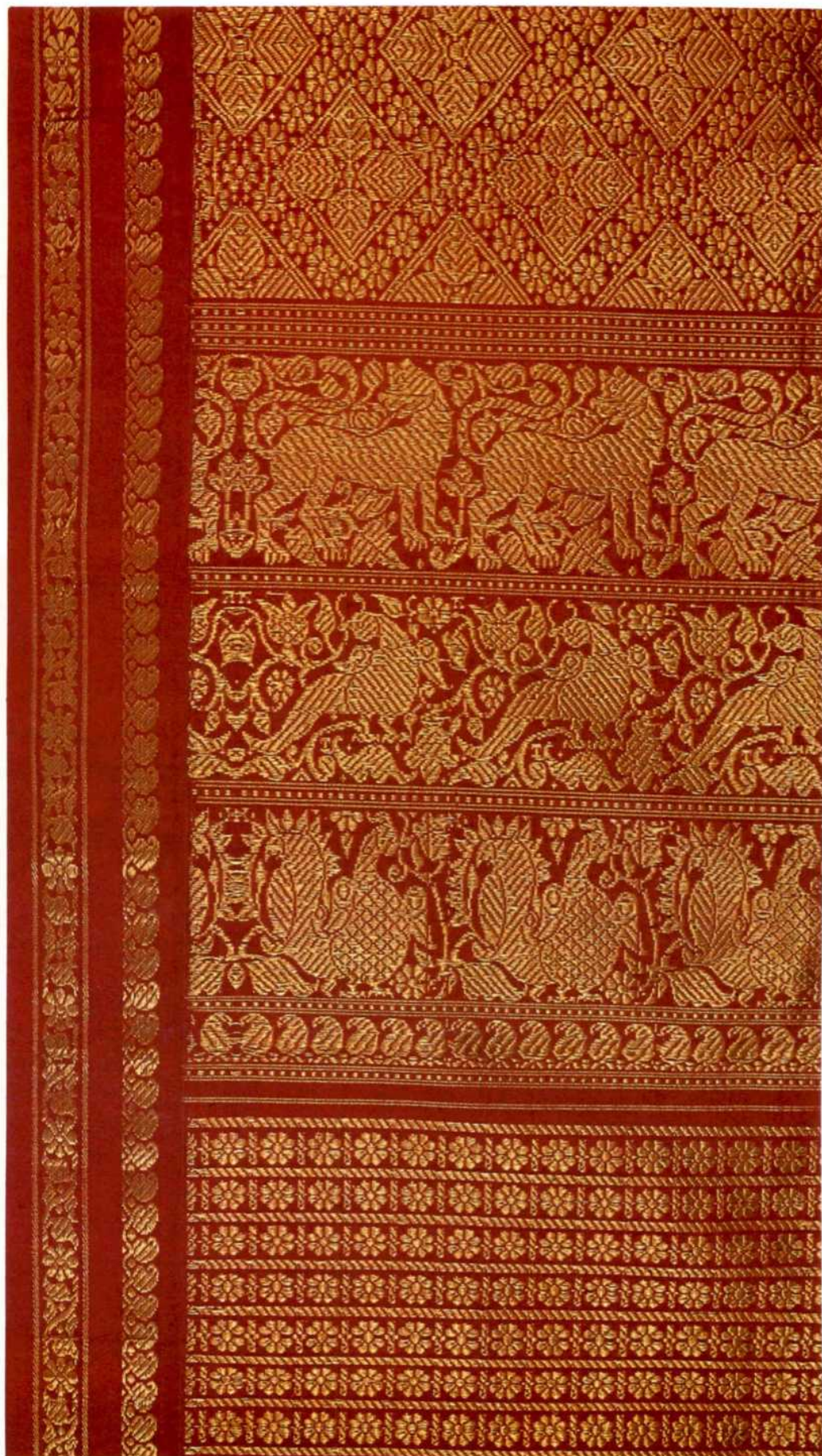
Rukmini Devi and Kalakshetra Textiles

Radha Sridhar

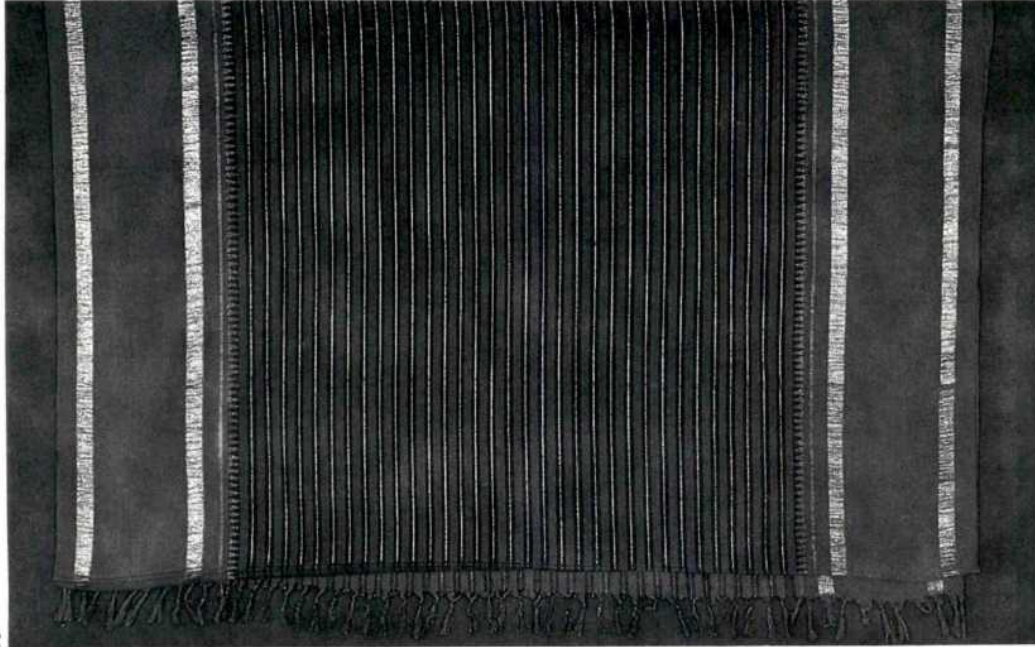
Ugliness is a crime. Every exterior thing is a visible expression of what is inside. Ugliness is a visible expression of what is inside. Therefore I say we may not be able to change our characters quickly, but let us at least do something—let us start to change the outside part first. Let us change ugliness, let us make beauty in the exterior. Perhaps the exterior beauty will evoke an inner beauty and will perhaps bring out better character.

Rukmini Devi Arundale's impassioned plea for beauty in the exterior found concrete expression in several fields. It is quite redundant to remind the public of her contribution to India's cultural renaissance, particularly her successful effort in reviving Bharata Natyam—which had sunk into a morass of decadence—and restoring it to its rightful place in Indian society and in the international arena. That endeavour formed an invigorating chapter in contemporary history but not many are aware that she was the prime motivator behind another kind of renaissance—of handloom textiles embellished with stunning traditional motifs.

At a time when cheap British mill-made textiles and cheaper chemical dyes from Europe were flooding the Indian market, Rukmini Devi had the courage to install looms, hire master weavers, and produce handloom textiles that became famous for their beauty and durability. When she started Kalakshetra on the outskirts of Madras in 1936, she envisaged it as a centre for a comprehensive education in the arts including the fine skills of weaving. The Craft Research and Education Centre was to provide traditionally designed handloom textiles for dance outfits as well as sarees. In 1938 six looms were installed, yarn



1. The red and gold *pallav* is intricately woven with traditional floral as well as animal and bird motifs. Courtesy Kalakshetra, Madras.



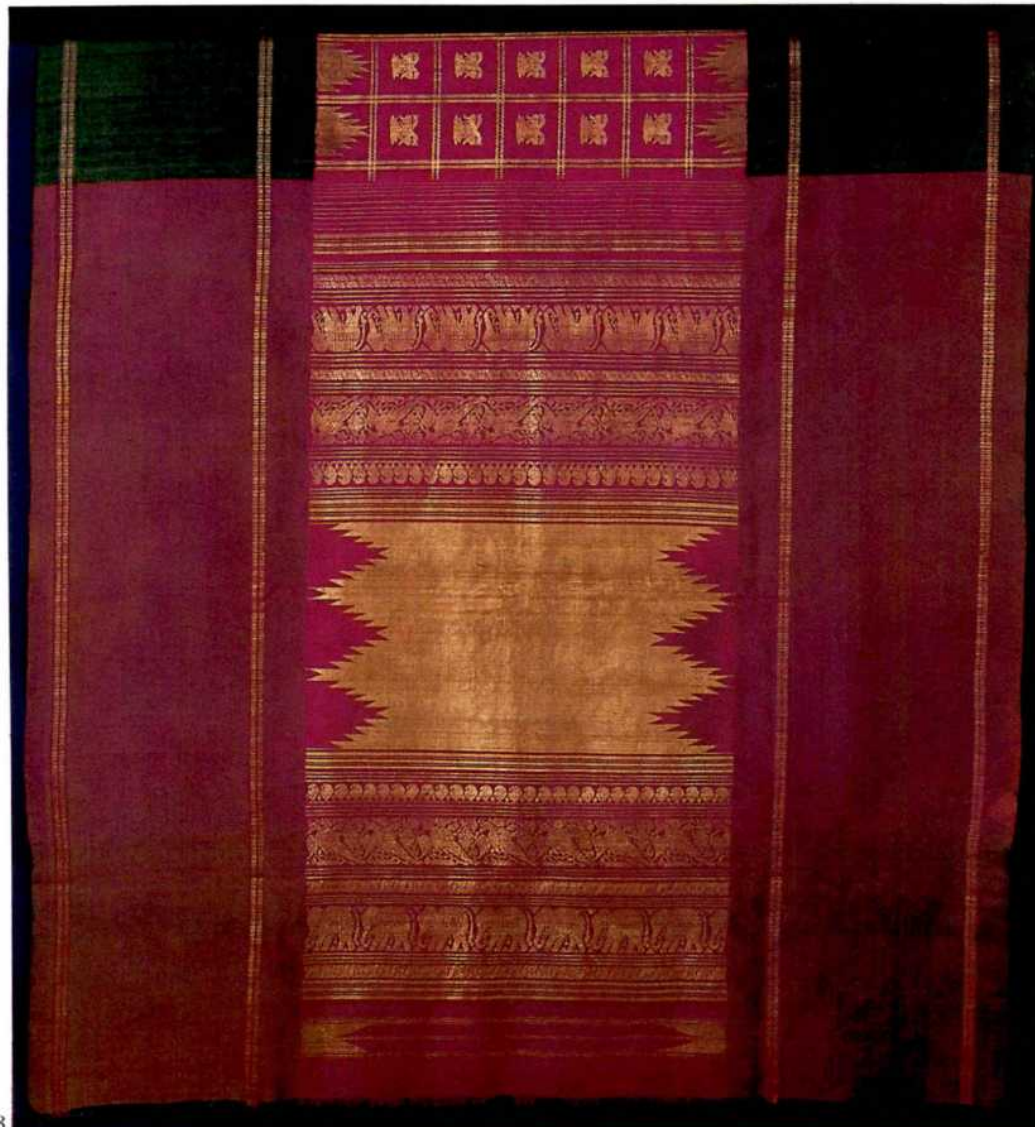
procured from Bangalore, and production got underway. Set against the backdrop of the nationalist movement, this resurrection of the handloom industry took on strident political overtones. Rukmini Devi – patriot, aesthete, collector, and connoisseur – had embarked on yet another mission of discovery.

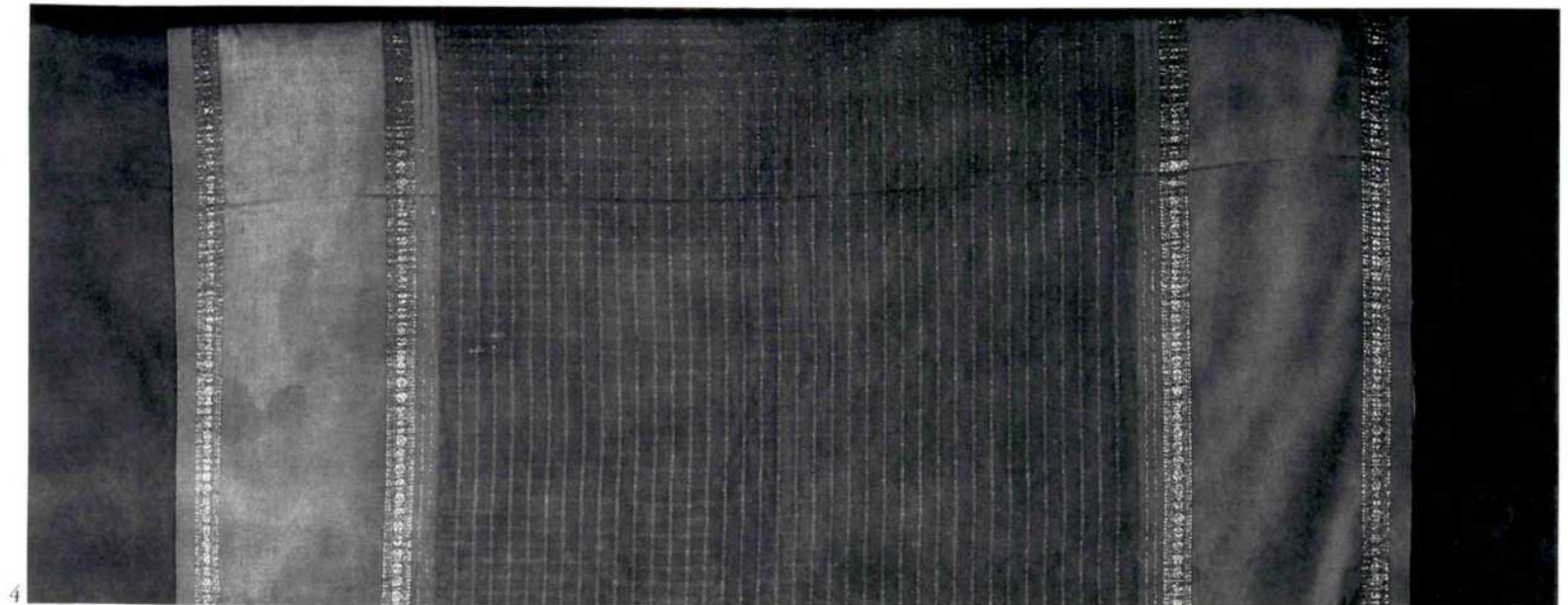
As with all her endeavours, Rukmini Devi assiduously researched old patterns. She gathered an impressive collection of textiles, mainly silk sarees, as a starting point. Memories of old-timers were tapped for designs and innovations were made within the aesthetic confines of age-old traditions. Soon, from the looms at Adyar there began to emerge Kalakshetra textiles and sarees deep-shaded, heavy-draping with a muted, understated elegance. The use of *zari* was minimal and judicious, with the exquisite silk thread work stunning in its eye-catching intricacy. The craft of weaving had become elevated to the level of a veritable fine art.

Even at the time it was established that weaving was not envisaged as a commercial venture. In a few years the Kalakshetra saree became extremely popular among the élite of the country. Orders started pouring in. During the war years the cost of silk yarn, dyes, and *zari* sky-rocketed, making it difficult to produce sarees except by order. In the fifties and sixties the weaving centre became a hive of activity with twenty-four looms. Its master craftsmen lived on the premises, turning out dhotis, *angavastrams* (upper cloth), handkerchiefs, shawls, and book covers. Even experiments in Ahimsa silk were tried, it being woven from yarn extracted from split silk cocoons from which the butterfly had flown.

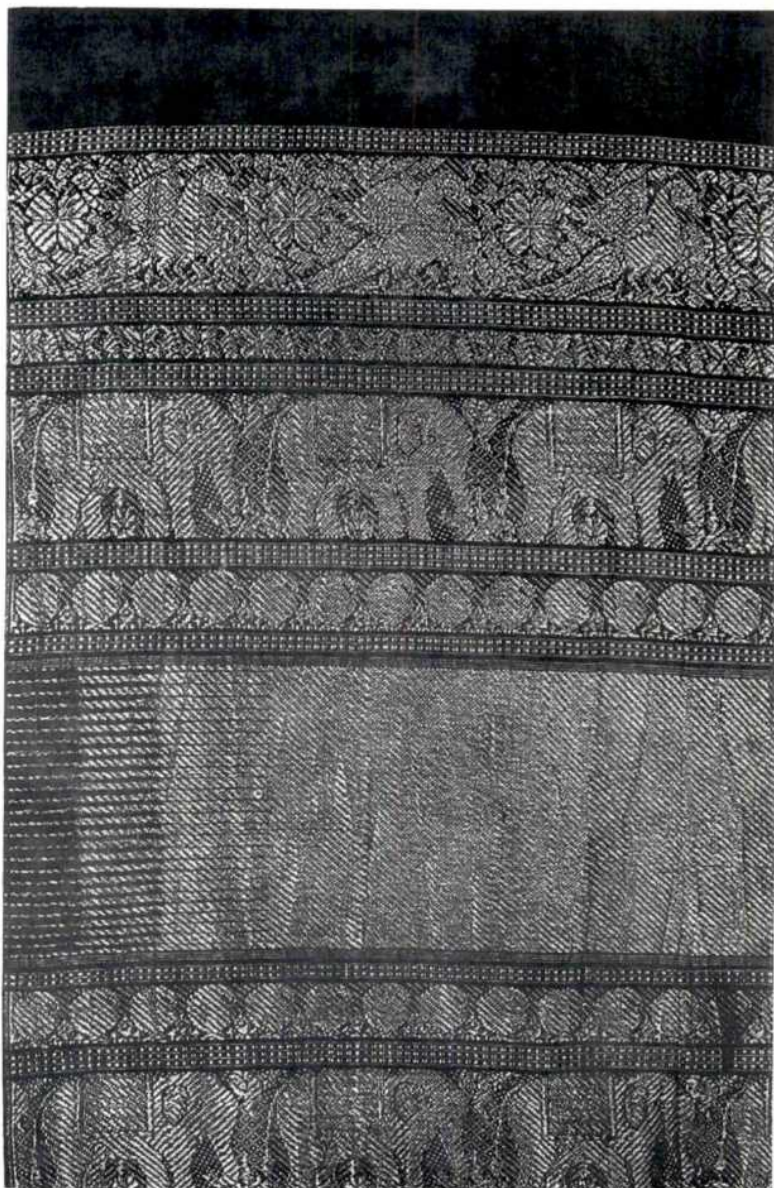
The *muppagam* (three-part) design is a Kalakshetra revival of an ancient classic. The saree is horizontally divided into three equal parts, the top and bottom parts forming broad borders. *Sabbai alankaram* (decoration for the *sabha* or hall) is another pattern with red and yellow checks. *Thazhambu* (*ketaki* flower), *mallimokku* (jasmine bud), *attumuzhi* (goat's eye), *neli* (wavy lines), *mayilkan* (peacock's eye) were some of the traditional motifs used in borders and *pallavs* in different combinations.

The very names of the colours are evocative of nature's richness and redolent with overtones of a traditional





4



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2. Woven in red, black, and gold, the saree has a *neli* pattern at its centre. Courtesy Kalakshetra, Madras.

3. Woven as a *muppagam*, this saree in magenta and green has mango, peacock, and elephant motifs in gold on the *pallav*, while the centre of the saree is worked in gold checks with a floral motif. Courtesy Kalakshetra, Madras.

4. A traditional red and ochre combination with large borders on both sides and gold checks at the centre. Courtesy Kalakshetra, Madras.

5. The gold *pallav* here is woven with alternating motifs of the mango, peacock, and elephant. Courtesy Kalakshetra, Madras.

6. These red borders are adorned with the popular coin motif while the body of the saree is in mustard with faint horizontal and vertical red lines. Courtesy Kalakshetra, Madras.



6

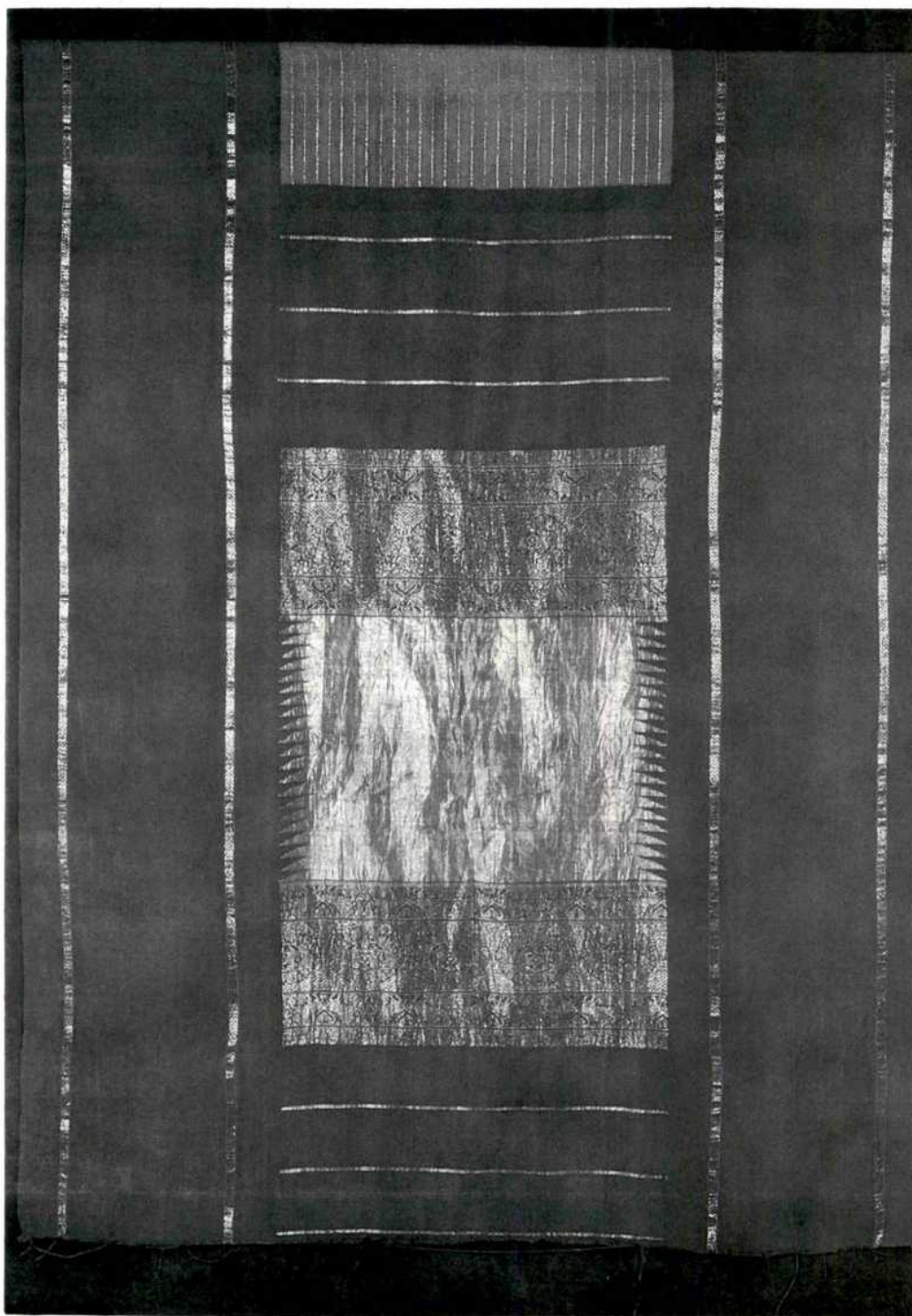
life-style – *pasu manjal* (fresh turmeric), mustard oil, *arakku* (lacquer), *mantulir* (tender mango leaves), *mayilkazbutbu* (peacock's neck), *gettirose* (pinkish red), and *kilipachai* (parrot green) recall the Tamil weavers' inspiration from the world around them.

After the seventies a decline set in, with Kalakshetra-trained weavers leaving the unit lured by lucrative offers elsewhere, so that by the eighties the unit was almost closed down except for a single loom and

a dedicated solitary weaver. But it was still not to be a mission that failed. The impetus given by Rukmini Devi to the revival of handloom textiles had gathered momentum after Independence. Kalakshetra weavers took with them the seeds of creativity and carefully instilled standards of excellence wherever they went. Mr Veerappan who retired as the chief designer of Co-optex, Tamil Nadu's state-run emporium, was a Kalakshetra-trained person. The handloom

fabric has now become part of a widespread fashion statement and holds its own despite stiff competition from millgoods. Countless manufacturers have copied the designs and Kalakshetra-style sarees with varying degrees of beauty and excellence are manufactured all over Tamil Nadu.

The story has not quite ended. On the anvil are plans for a revival of the textile unit consisting of a weaving section, with facilities for fabric printing and *kalamkari* work. To preserve and exhibit the fabulous collection of sarees a textile museum is also planned. When these plans become a reality, the dream of Rukmini Devi will have been fully realized.



7. In parrot green and maroon, this saree has a rich *pallav* woven in gold. Courtesy Kalakshetra, Madras.

Preservation of Textiles

O. P. Agrawal

Textiles probably constitute a class of objects which is most susceptible to deterioration. And yet, due to its universal application, there would hardly be any household where a textile in some form or the other is not found. Clothes are worn by everyone, young and old, men and women, rich and poor.

Man must have felt, at a very early stage of civilization, the need to cover his body with something to protect it from heat and cold. No wonder, there is a large variety of textiles available in museums and private collections, ranging from a simple cotton saree to ornately decorated costumes of silk or wool. They could be embroidered shawls or brocaded

angarkhas and *cholis*. In fact, an infinite variety of textiles and costumes as clothing has come down to us as our heritage.

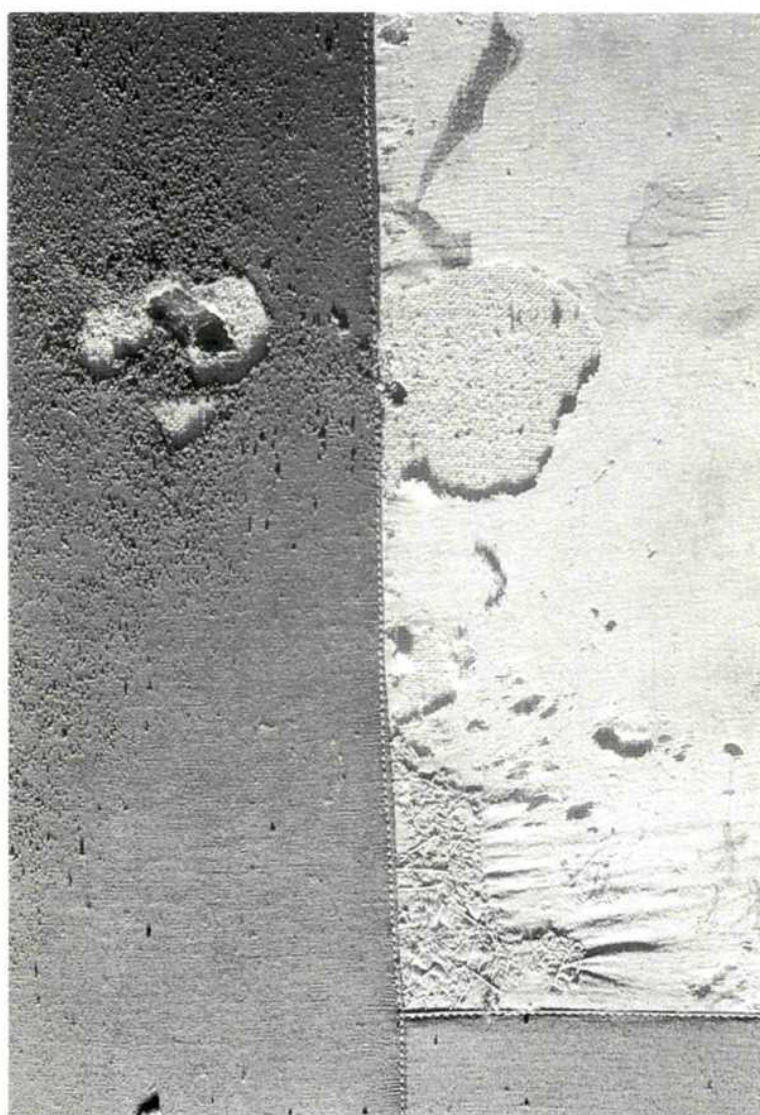
Prehistoric man probably used the bark of trees or a garment made of leaves. A revolution came about when he learnt to spin and weave. Textiles being of such a fundamental nature, were produced in abundance through every period of human civilization. Coloured fabrics were made when man learnt to extract dyes from plants and used them successfully to impart colour to the textile. Later, synthetic dyes were introduced and because of the ease of their application the use of natural dyes was almost abandoned.

Textiles, therefore, constitute a very important part of most museum collections throughout the world. The most important materials of which textiles were made in early days were cotton, silk, wool, hemp, and ramie. Today, however,

there is an abundance of synthetic materials as well. The fibres of which textiles are made can thus be divided into two main categories: natural fibres and man-made fibres.

Fibres from plants, animals, and insects, such as cotton, flax, hemp, jute, wool, and silk are natural fibres. Those made in a factory use non-fibrous substances, such as nylon, polyester, or terylene. They are recent inventions and in museums, textiles of natural fibres are mostly the curator's concern.

1. A textile flag affected by fungus.
2. Another textile damaged by insects.



Most natural textile fibres are susceptible to various factors of deterioration. Being organic in nature, humidity, light, insects, and micro-organisms damage them.

THE EFFECT OF LIGHT

Light poses a great danger to all types of textiles. It not only weakens the fabric, but also fades the dye if the textile is coloured. The wavelengths of light responsible for weakening the fabric are invisible ultra-violet rays. The fading of dyes, on the other hand, is mostly caused by the visible wavelength of light. Because all textiles are extremely susceptible to light, extra care must be taken to protect them from its adverse effects. The following are some precautions to this end:

1. Intensity of illumination should be kept low;
2. Ultra-violet absorbing filters should be used on light sources;
3. In the galleries exhibiting textiles, light should be indirect, reflected against a surface coated with zinc oxide or titanium trioxide. Since natural light has a higher proportion of ultra-violet rays, wherever possible only artificial light should be used in the galleries exhibiting textiles.

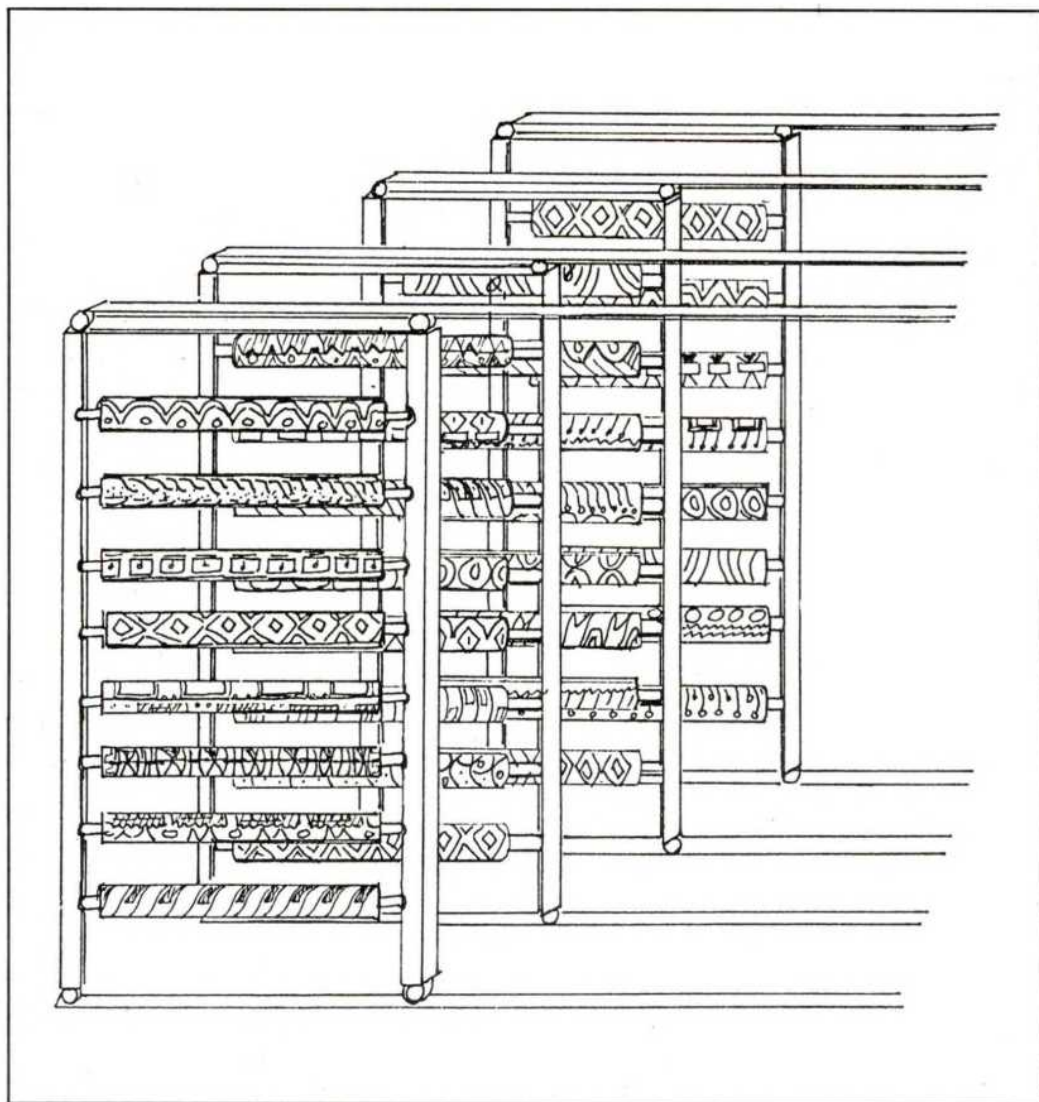
THE EFFECT OF FUNGUS

Fungus also grows on textiles, especially on cotton, flax, hemp, and jute. Fungus not only weakens the fabric, it also leaves stains which are difficult to remove.

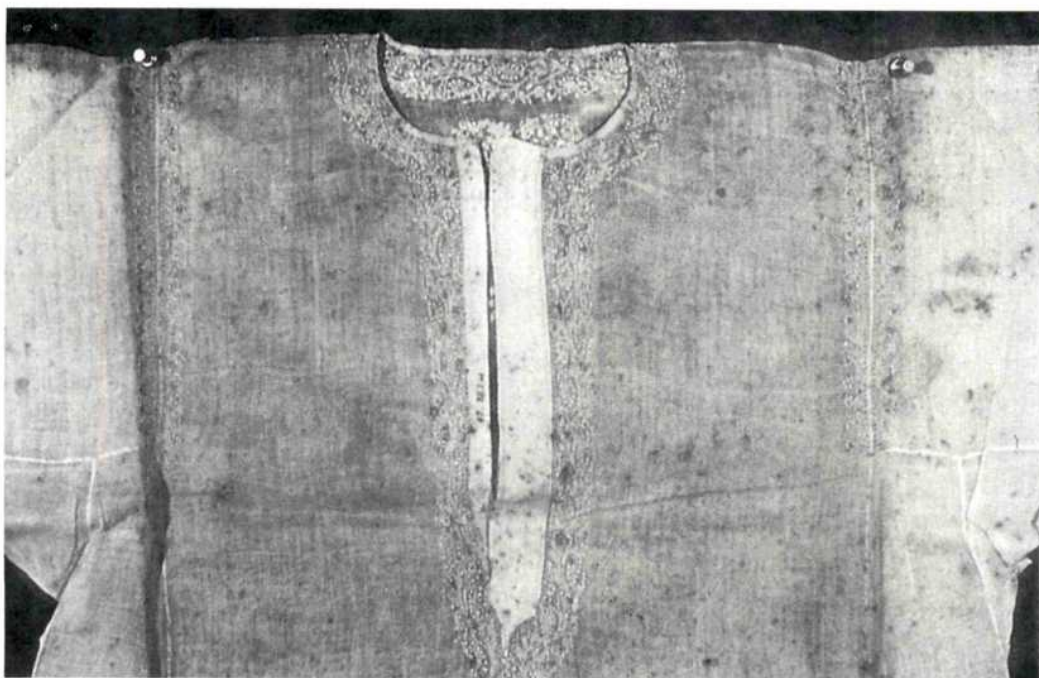
High humidity in showcases and storage areas accelerates the growth of fungi. As is well known, cellulosic material is hygroscopic in nature and, therefore, absorbs moisture from the atmosphere. In such a situation fungus grows quickly. The first step for the prevention of the growth of fungus on textiles is to store textiles in a dry atmosphere. They must also be saved from dust because dust particles are the seats where fungus grows quickly. Periodic fumigation is the other means of protection of textiles from fungus.

THE EFFECT OF INSECTS

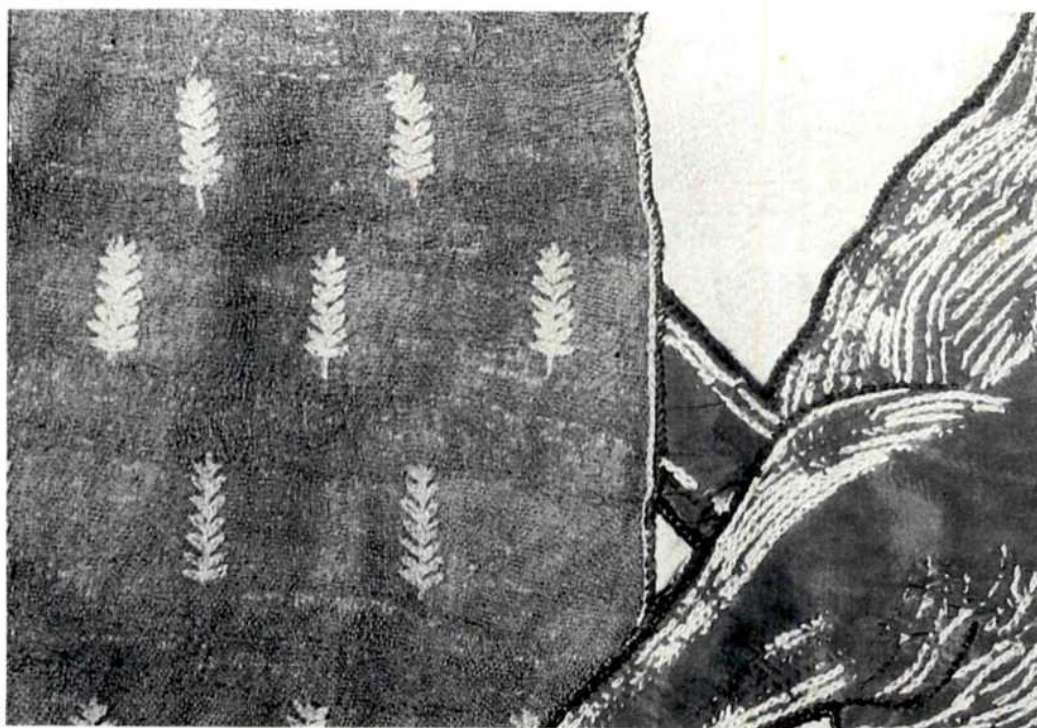
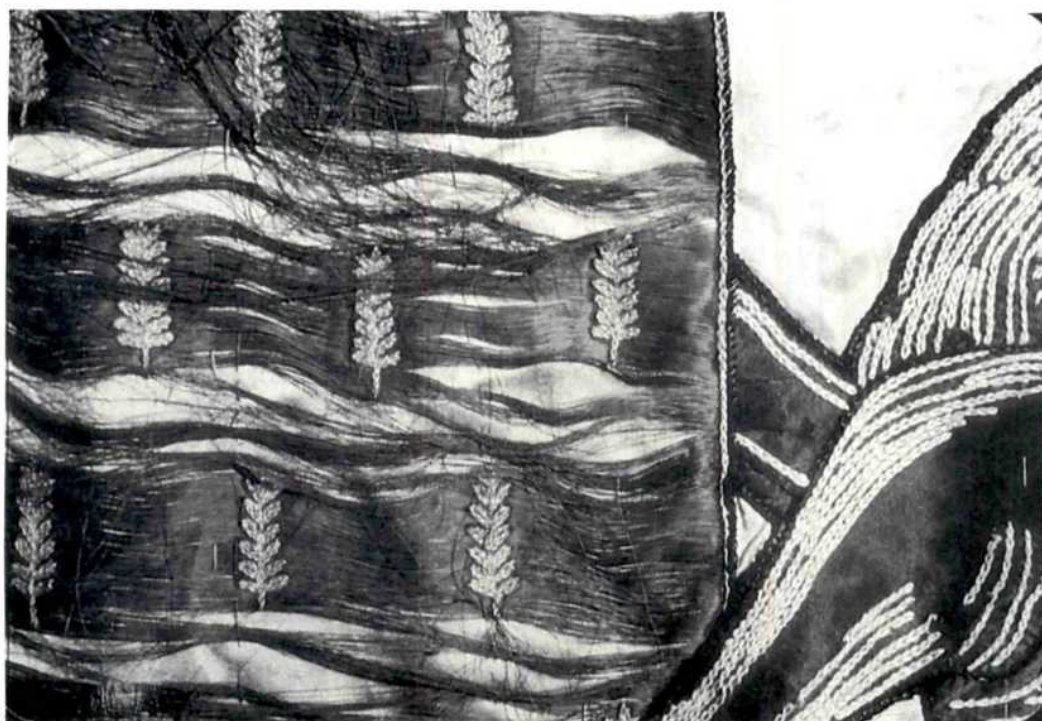
Textiles are also damaged by insects of various types. Termites can destroy all types of textiles. Everyone is familiar with wool-moths which attack woollen clothes. Cockroaches eat cotton material and damage it. Certain beetles such as the dermestid damage wool and silk. It is, therefore, important that special care is



3



4



taken to protect textiles from biodeterioration agencies. Periodic inspection of the collections must be made. Good ventilation of storage areas and exhibition galleries is necessary. Since wool is easily damaged by moths, fumigant-type insecticides, like naphthalene flakes and para-dichlorobenzene should always be used in their storage areas. Naphthalene, however, will tarnish metal work on textiles and should not come in its contact. To increase the safety of storage against insects, cupboards and shelves where textiles are kept, if made of wood, should be sprayed with a 1% lindane solution. In case textiles become infested with insects, they must be promptly isolated and fumigated. Care must be exercised to ensure that insects do not escape to other collections and contaminate them too.

STORAGE

Textiles are extremely delicate and are easily damaged by faulty handling and improper storage. As far as possible, folding should be avoided, because they will weaken at the folds and ultimately tear. They should preferably be stored on rollers, or tubes, of which the ends project beyond the textiles, in order to protect them from damage.

When rolling textiles on tubes, care should be taken to avoid creases. To economize space several rollers may be hung on frames, placed fairly close together, but arranged to slide on castors, thus allowing a frame to be pulled out for removal of the rollers of the textile required for study or exhibition.

If it is necessary to fold a textile, the folds should not be in a sharp crease and should be padded with tissue paper. The first should always be parallel to the warp. Warp strands are generally more tightly twisted than those of the weft, which are, therefore, more likely to be damaged by folding. Labels are always fixed on rollers for easy identification.

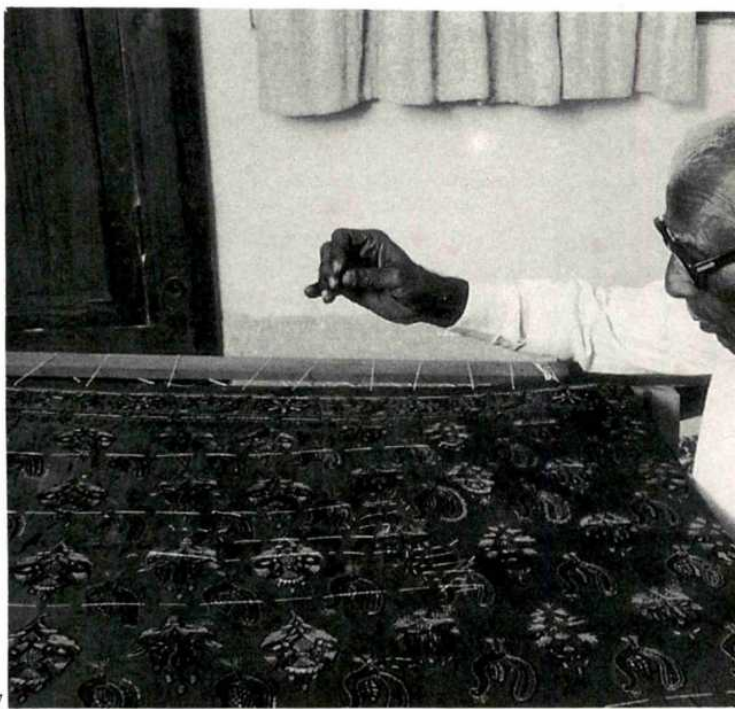
Because of the various shapes and sizes in which they are made costumes pose a difficult storage problem. Since they are not flat, they cannot be rolled on tubes. One method of storing them is to hang them on padded hangers, with polythene sheets or bags to cover them. The hangers carrying costumes should be stored in a cabinet with ample space to avoid crushing. They should be hung, one beside the other, in such a manner that one can be taken out easily, whenever desired for study or exhibition. This method of storing costumes, however,

3. It is better to store flat textiles on rollers—a system of rollers.

4. A heavily stained textile.

5. A silk embroidered flag before restoration.

6. The same portion of the flag after treatment.



7. A textile restorer at work.

has a very great disadvantage: the entire weight of the costume falls on the part supported by the hanger. This strain is sure to cause damage and shorten the life of the fabric. It can be avoided only if costumes are stored flat. Here also folds should be avoided as far as possible. If unavoidable, pads or sheets of tissue paper may be inserted at the folds. Costumes having metal work or ornamentation are especially susceptible to damage by folding and need careful padding.

Parts of costumes should never be packed tightly one over the other. If two or more are stored together, packing must be loose and ample padding used. To store costumes in a flat position, drawers are useful. These may be in cupboards which, like the drawers, should be constructed of wood and hardboard, both of which may remain unpolished; this will permit the humidity within the drawers to remain relatively stable. The cupboards, with drawers, should be made dust-proof, because dust is very destructive to textiles.

PHYSICAL DAMAGE

All textiles stain and discolor with age. If disfiguring, they should be removed. The material of the costume should be taken into account when examined. It should be covered with a material that will not take ink or other marks. It should be in the storage container.

Metal clips, pins, or never be used on textiles. They rust quickly in contact with textiles and leave stains on them. Scotch or cello tape should be used for repairs and not for other purpose. It is not only by leaving the textiles weakening the fabric. The numbers should be marked on the tapes, which can be removed from the textiles without damage.

It is always a good idea to have collections inspected by a conservation laboratory. It has one. Other experts can help in order to identify weaknesses and obtain advice as to the best way in applying repairs.

The presence of moisture in the fabric itself or in the case of embroidery, their dyes, will cause the cellulosic fabric to become discolored.



Head Pectoral. Mexico, Olmec, Gulf Coast or Guerrero. C. 1000-600 BC. Jadeite with traces of cinnabar; 5.1 x 3.2 centimetres. Los Angeles County Museum of Art, Gift of Constance McCormick Fearing, M.83.217.1. Photograph: courtesy LACMA.

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LATEST BOOK

THE WORLD OF JADE

Edited by Stephen Markel
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Unparalleled in its sheer versatility and expressive qualities, jade has been both revered and traded the world over for centuries. The exotic mineral inspiring poetry and scholarship alike is pre-eminently associated with the cultural genius of China, though less familiar masterpieces were similarly accomplished under the Timurid, Ottoman, Safavid, and Mughal dynasties, as well as in Renaissance Europe, Meso- and Central America during the pre-Columbian era, and among the Maoris of New Zealand. Besides highlighting such little-known traditions, *The World of Jade*, as a collaborative effort undertaken by leading scholars, also features recent discoveries.

The World of Jade

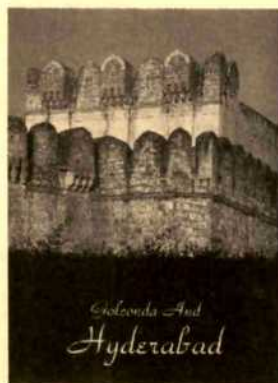


AVAILABLE ART BOOKS

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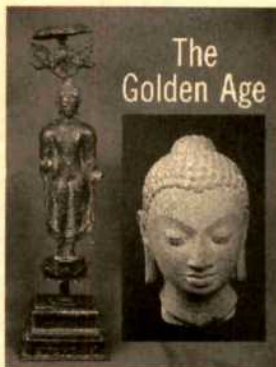
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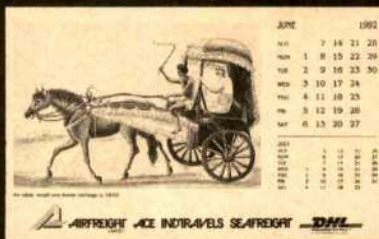
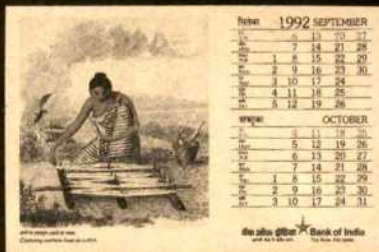
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Small Is Beautiful

There already exists considerable literature on various aspects of miniature painting, most of it written with a distinct bias for the political history of the erstwhile princely states. But the aesthetic aspects of that art-tradition have been somehow side-tracked. There is, thus, a need to re-orient the approach to the appreciation of that glorious art heritage.

The critical study *Siva in Art* is an effort to set a new trend in that direction. An attempt has been made here to explore linear, tonal, and compositional qualities of a selection of the traditional miniature paintings on the Saiva theme, and to evaluate and correlate each of them with its respective subject without going into needless historical narratives and topical literary references. How far the treatment of the subject in the painting conforms to the canonic stipulation, has also been thoroughly probed so that the book can emerge as a critical study of miniature paintings on the Saiva theme.

The book is planned in two parts, each dealing with a different topic: in the exhaustive introduction, the Saiva pantheology has been discussed with reference to the scriptural iconographic details of Siva and his numerous manifestations. In the second part, the miniature paintings have been evaluated for their aesthetic qualities and thematic treatment with due reference to the canonic iconographical stipulations to ensure their critical appreciation.

***Siva in Art*, O. C. Handa, Indus Publishing Company, Rs. 650.00.**

A Comprehensive History

Islamic Art by Barbara Brend presents a well-illustrated Muslim history examining the magnificent achievement of Muslim artists and craftsmen over 1200 years, from the seventh to the nineteenth centuries.

The range and depth of the study make it the most comprehensive survey of Islamic art published for many years and its ample illustrations capture the glory of the culture it explores.

Architecture, manuscripts, ceramics and glass, metalwork, textiles and carpets, with their distinctive subtlety of outline and sumptuous decoration formed the basis of a cultural heritage of extraordinary richness. And yet, under different local conditions—in Arabia or Turkey, Central Asia or Spain, North Africa, India or Iran—and in the hands of Arabs, Seljuks, or Mughals, this shared heritage produced a great diversity of styles, which the writer examines region by region. She also considers the specific character of Islamic art and its influence in the West, as well as looking at modern developments.

The book, which should prove an essential work for scholars and the general reader alike, contains a useful glossary of Arabic, Turkish, and Persian terms.

***Islamic Art*, Barbara Brend, British Museum Press, £14.95.**

Pahari Painting: An Analysis

Scholarship is divided on the question of the conditions that led to the beginnings of the art genre known as Pahari painting as well as about the period of its beginning. Lack of any evidence on the subject gave rise to speculation and in spite of this art-form receiving worldwide attention for about the last eight decades when A. K. Coomaraswamy rescued it from oblivion through his celebrated book, *Rajput Painting*, we are where we were with regard to our knowledge of its early history.

While this great Indologist had laid more emphasis on the continuity of the ancient tradition for the origins of Rajput (Rajasthani and Pahari) painting, later scholars such as Karl Khandalavala and others have throughout stressed the role of Mughal painting in the evolution of this art. Both these views are only partially correct because one sees several strains in Pahari painting. The confusion became more confounded because of suggested "simplistic theories" based on two well-known historical facts—lack of interest in the arts on the part of the Mughal emperor, Aurangzeb, and his long absence from Delhi—considered to be responsible for the dispersal of painters from Delhi and some of them subsequently reaching the Punjab hill states in search of patronage. Obviously, some examples from Europe (but in disregard of the conditions in this hilly region) had influenced such opinion.

Unlike the universal sources (the interest of patrons for meeting religious needs and contacts made with the centres of art) which contributed to the "beginnings" of an art activity in an area, the historical reasons carried more appeal. Another event (not the subject of this study), Nadar Shah's sack of Delhi in 1739, considered responsible for dispersing painters and bringing stylistic changes to Pahari painting, has been proved incorrect. Scholars have, however, not paid any attention to the perplexing problem of the origins of Pahari painting. Occasional suggestions asserting that some Pahari paintings pre-date the Aurangzeb period never found acceptance.

This book traces the origins of Pahari painting to the beginning of the seventeenth century and includes some visual material definitively dating to that period and related to this hilly region. Documentary evidence discovered by the writer, corrects some factual errors in the history of the Punjab hill states which had so far proved misleading. The existence of ancient traits, especially the multiple compositions of narratives in Pahari wall-paintings published here for the first time, points to the continuity of the tradition of Indian painting in the Pahari region. An analysis of certain aspects of architecture and ritual paintings amply demonstrates the assimilation of the influence of sixteenth-century north Indian painting. The Shimla museum *Devi Mahatmya* is one representation of it.

The writer concludes that the developments in the sixteenth century in north India, known to have released the age-old pictorial imagination were also felt in the Punjab hills. A Nurpur Raja, who was a general under Akbar and Jahangir, brought several artisans and painters for building a new capital in the late sixteenth century, thus heralding an interaction between migrant artists and local painters, giving birth to a new art-form.

***On the Origins of Pahari Painting*, Vishwa Chander Ohri, Indian Institute of Advanced Study in association with Indus Publishing Company, Rs. 220.00.**



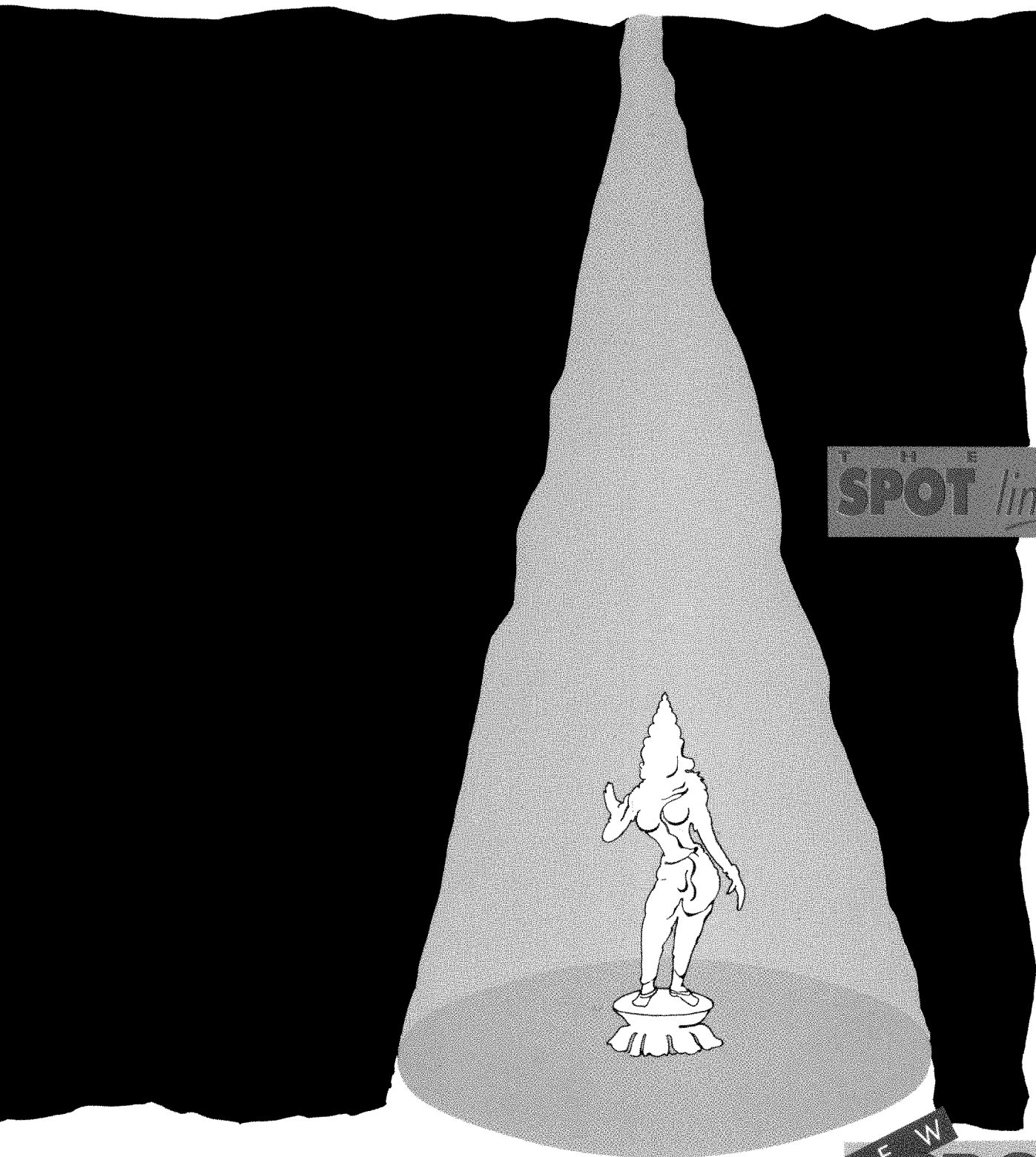
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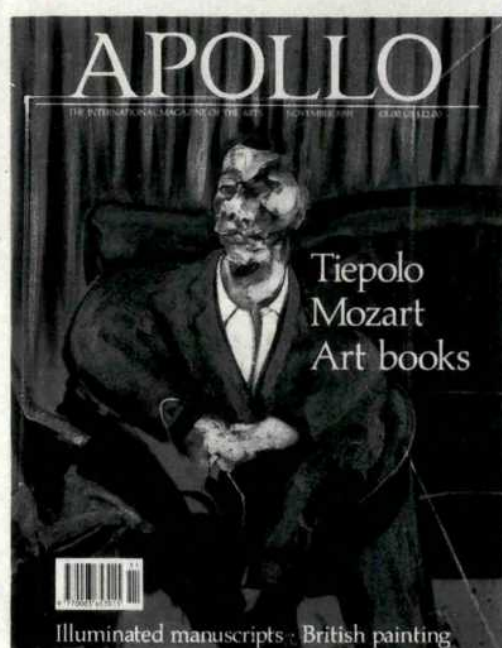
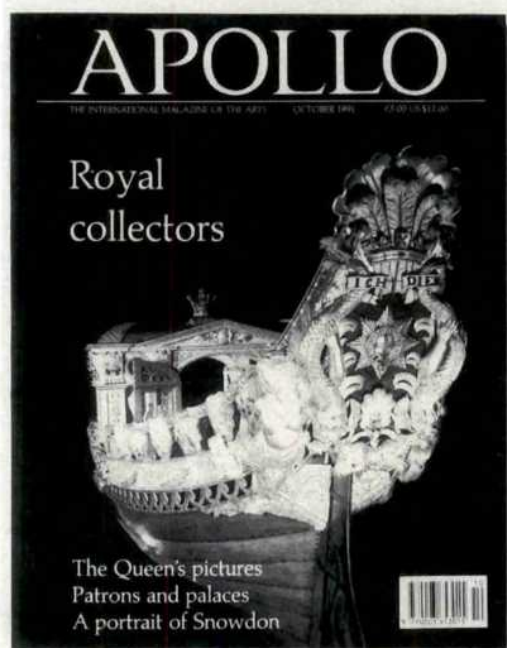
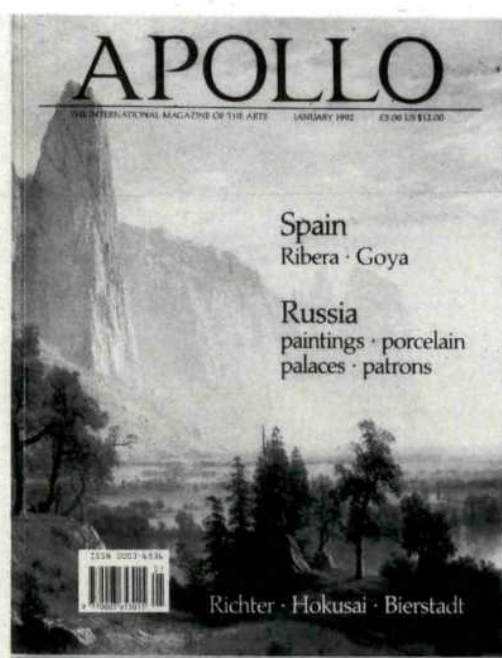
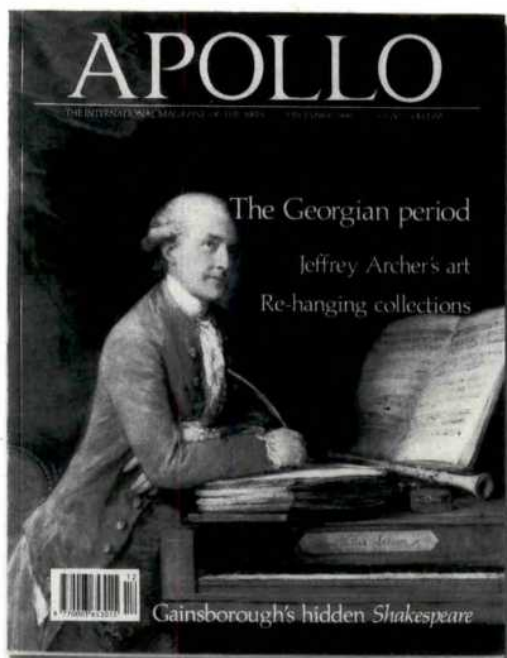
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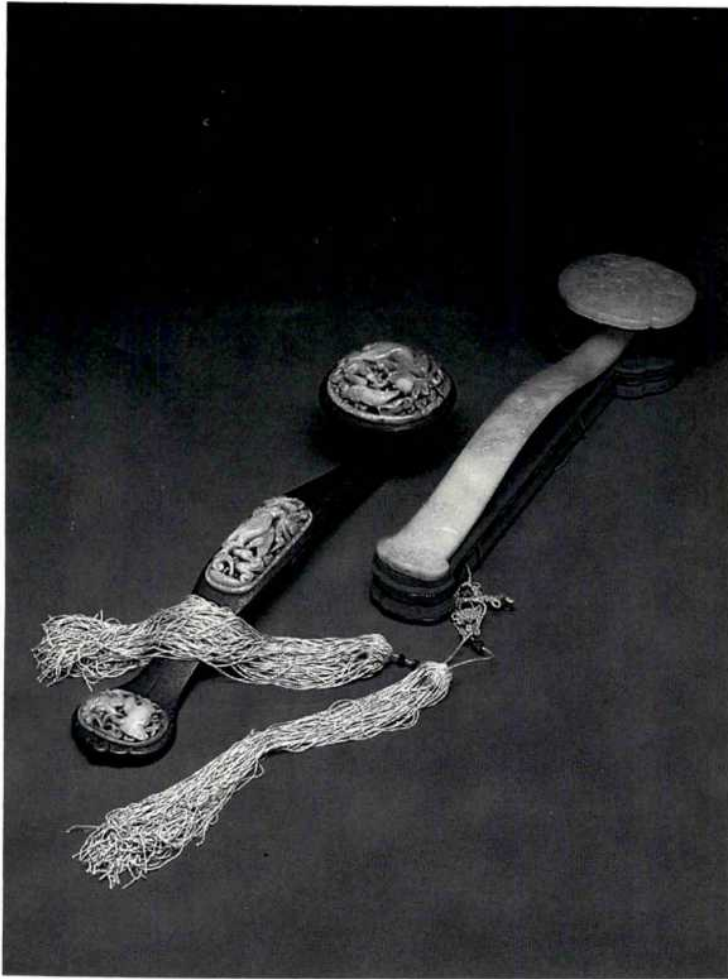
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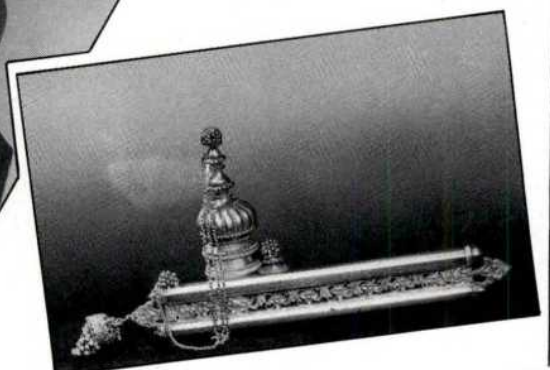
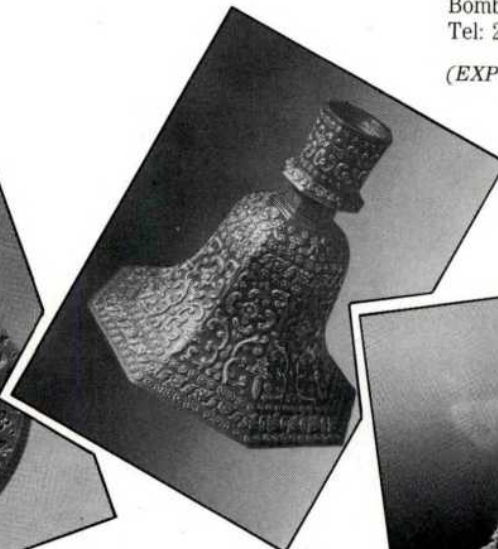
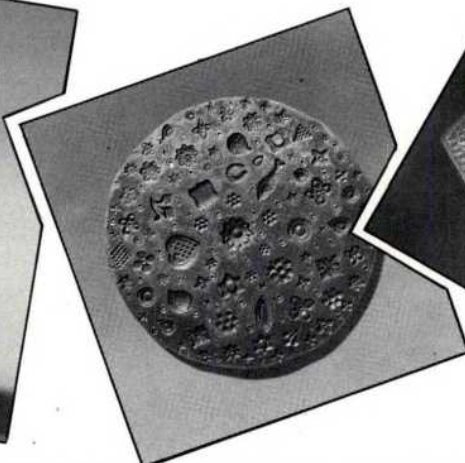
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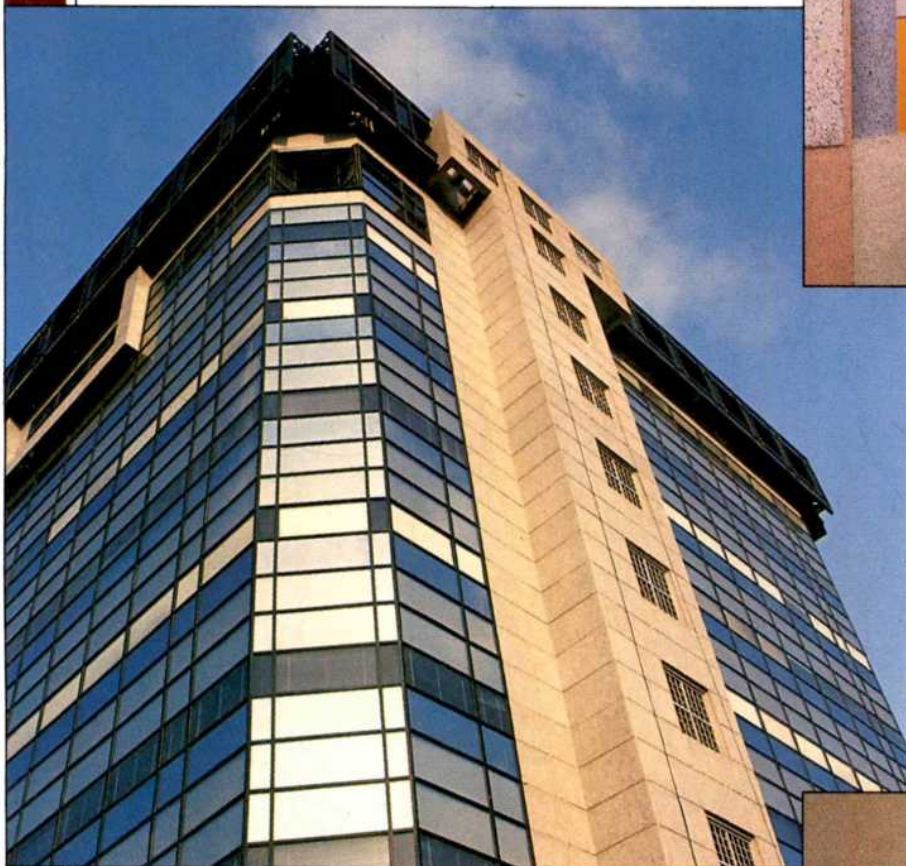
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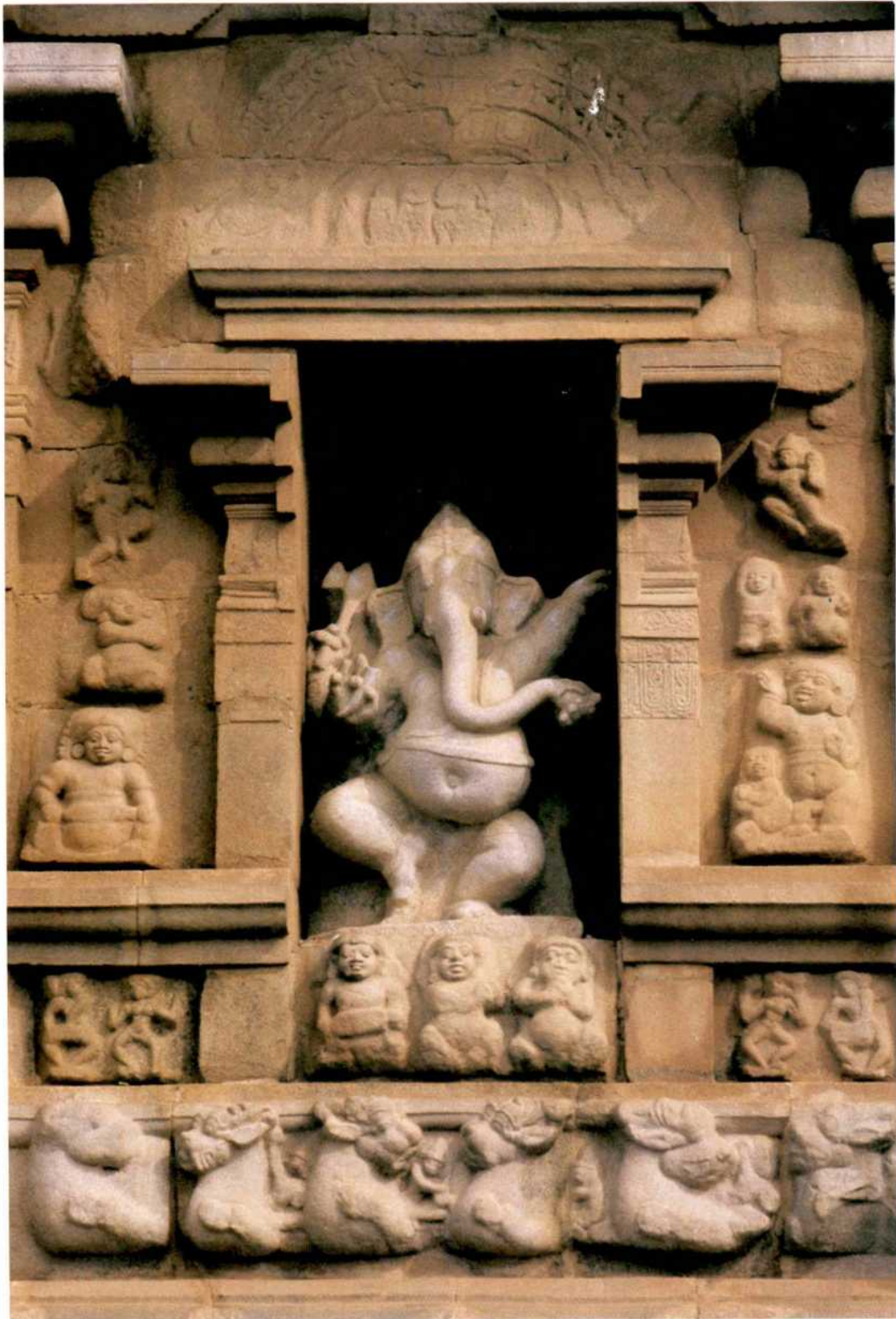
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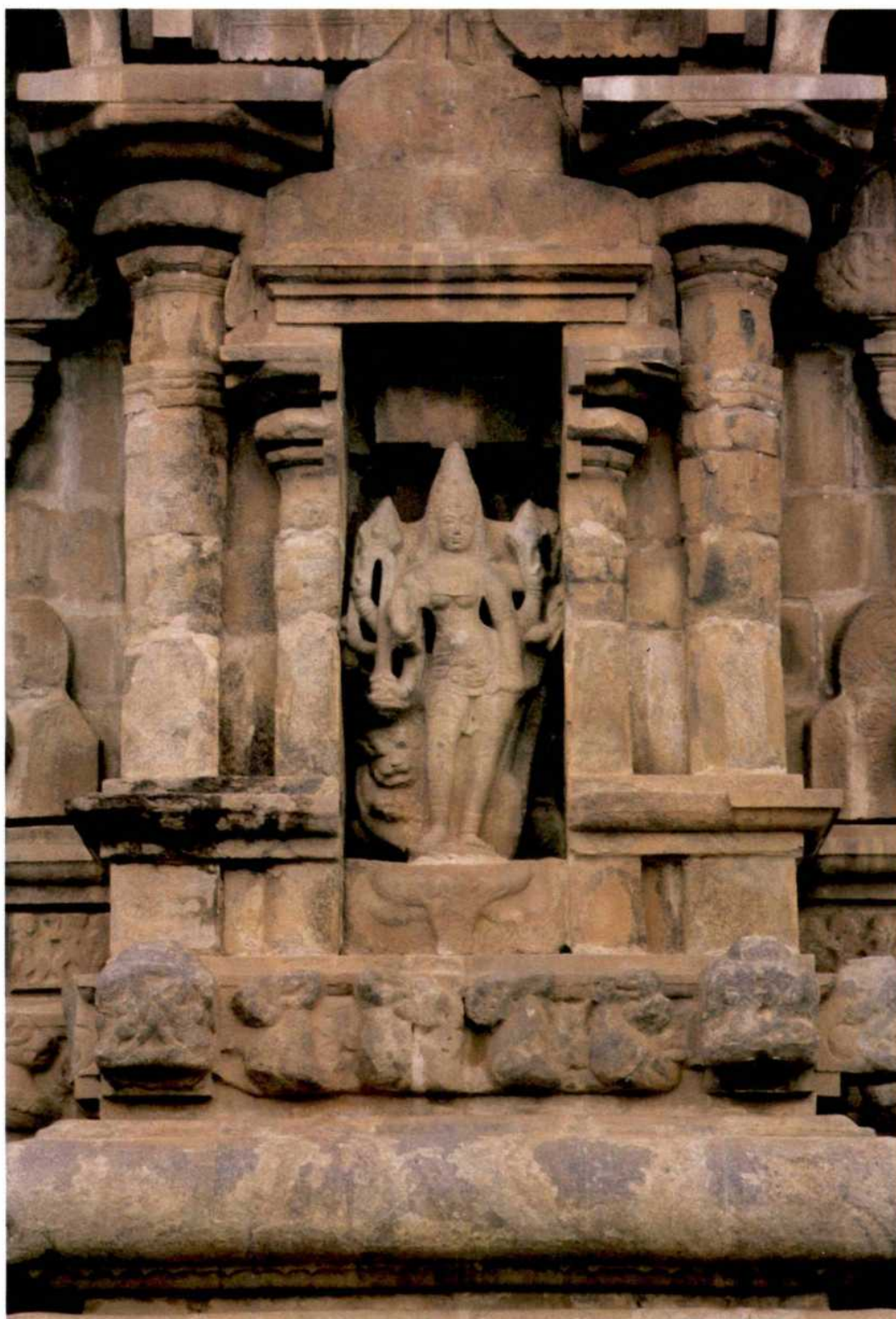
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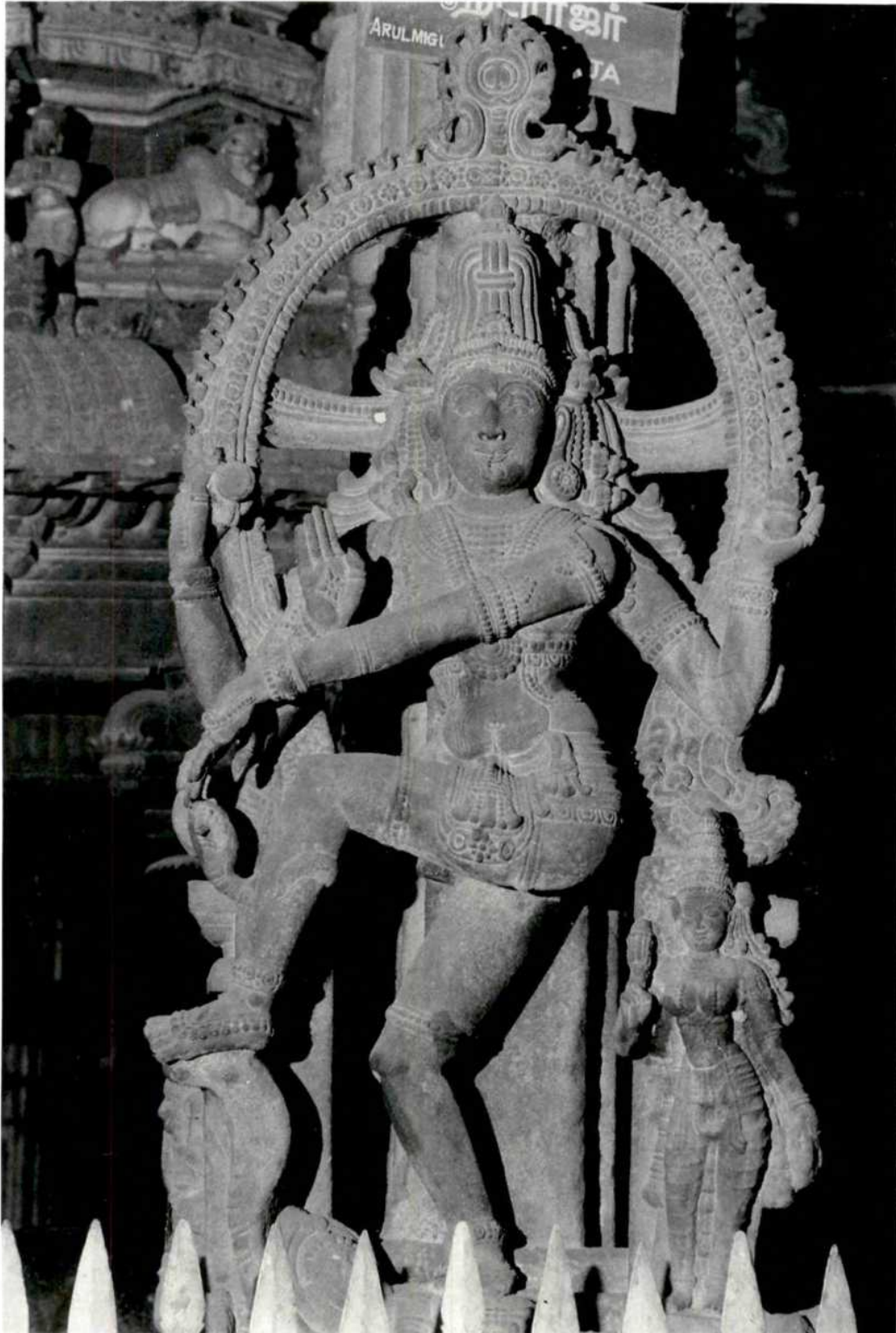
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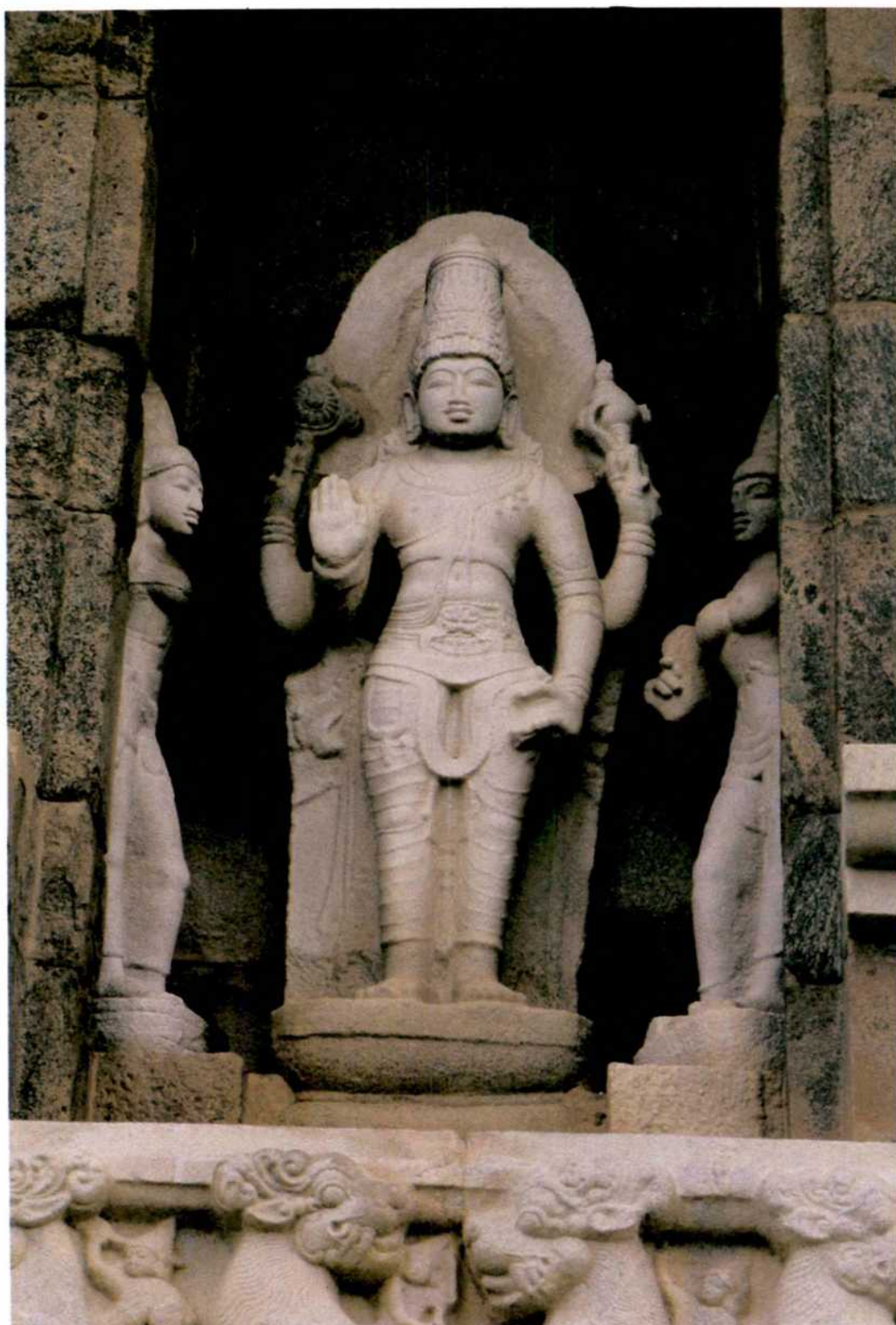


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Cover: Tiruvannamalai, Arunachaleshvara temple, tank in outermost enclosure.

Photography: Bharath Ramamrutham.

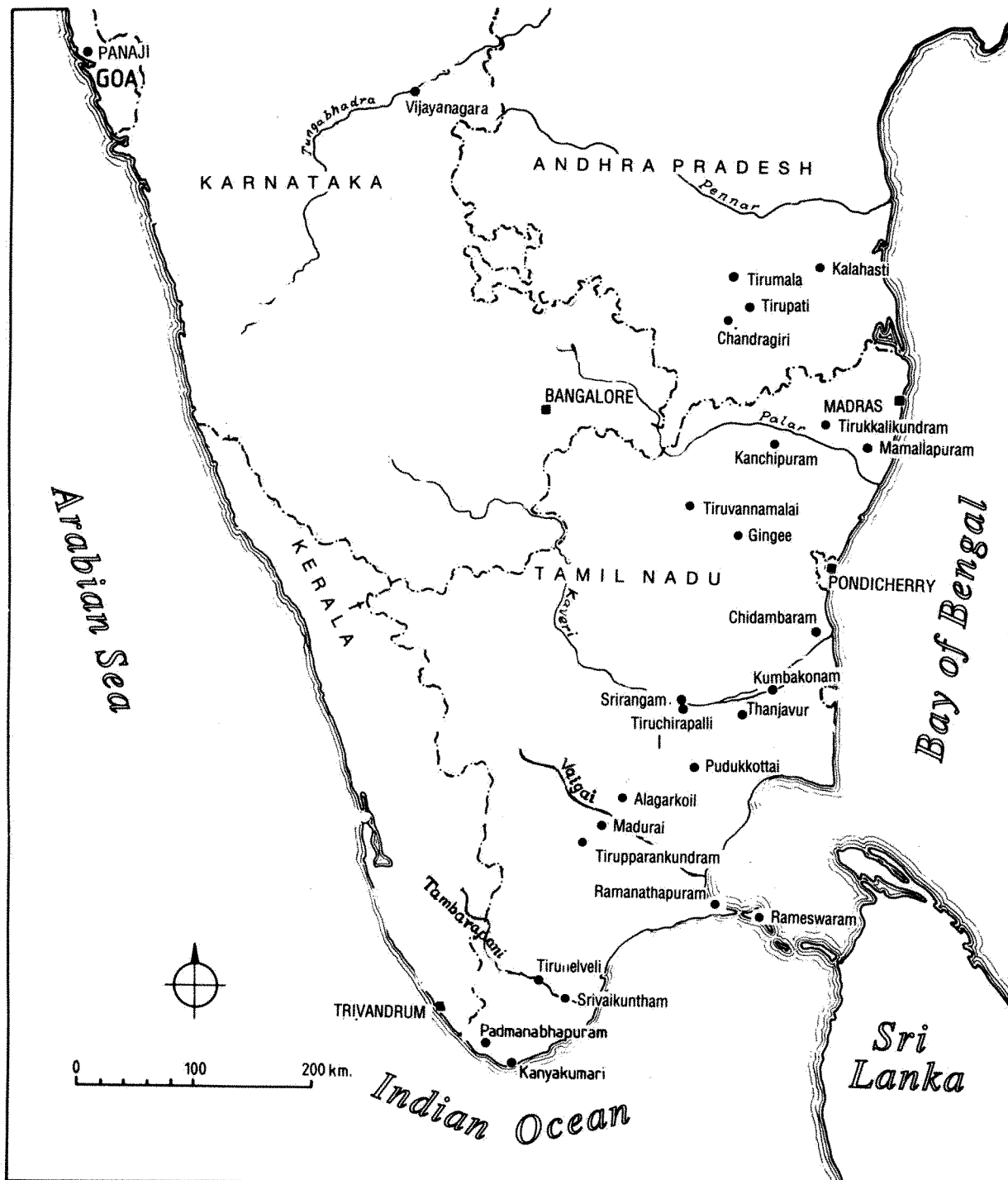
Colour processing by Comart Lithographers Private Limited, Bombay 400 025.

PREFACE

Tamil Nadu preserves virtually intact a remarkable and vigorous religious tradition. Myths and rituals continue to dominate the everyday lives of almost the entire population, dictating the daily, weekly, and annual calendars of shrines, towns, and cities, and inspiring major building projects and works of art. While this issue of *Marg* acknowledges the genius of South Indian architecture, sculpture, and painting, the chapters look beyond the monuments to focus on the interaction between sacred space and urban space that is such a prominent feature of Tamil Nadu's temple towns. The studies concentrate on a select number of examples—Kanchipuram, Tiruvannamalai, and Chidambaram—each of which is examined in terms of its broader mythological and ritualistic context. Taking an approach that derives more from religious studies than from art history, the writers contribute towards a better understanding of the enduring purpose of the architecture, sculpture, and painting by locating these arts within a still living, urban religious tradition.

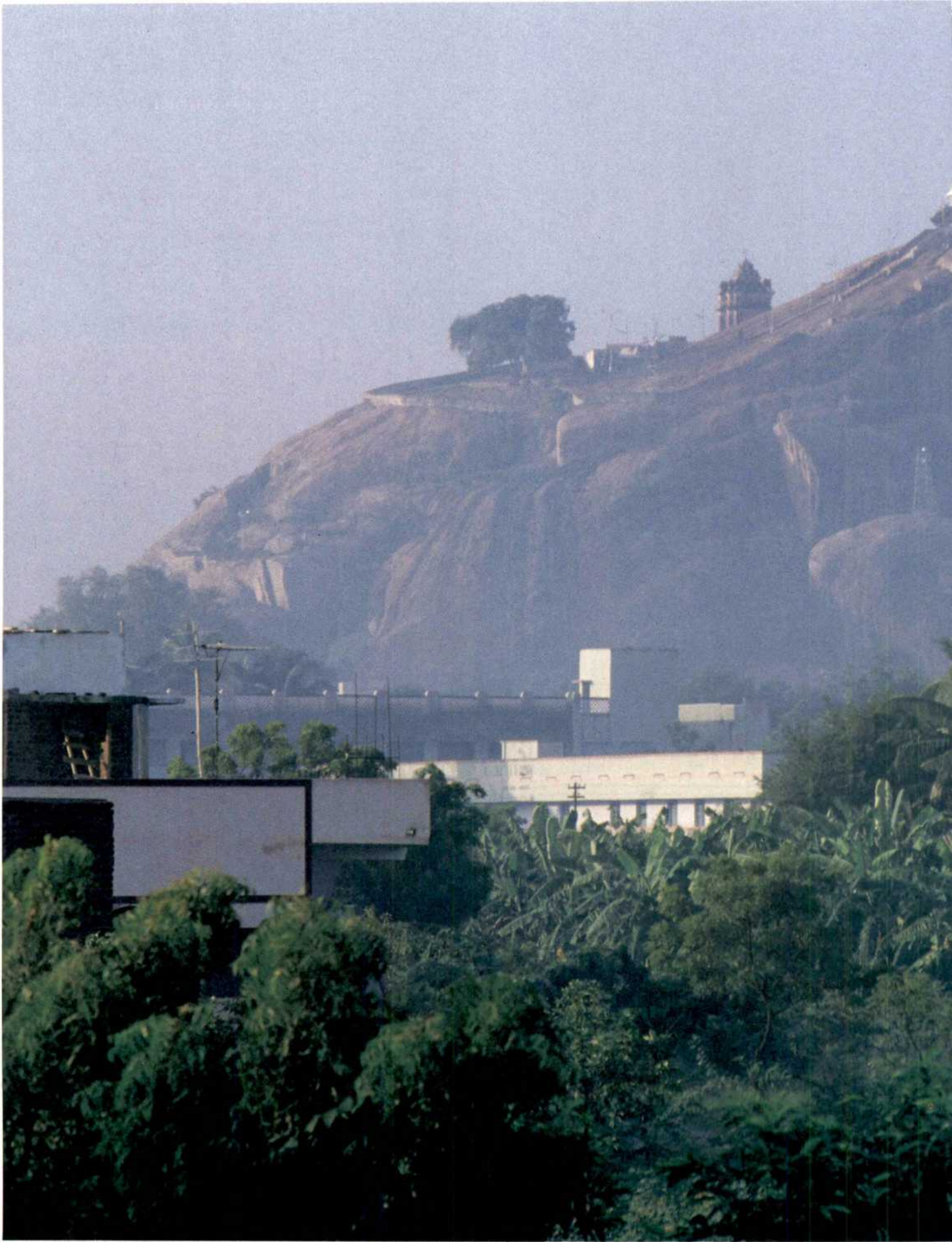
The editor wishes to thank the writers who so generously agreed to contribute to this volume at unreasonably short notice, offering the results of their many combined years of research. The photographer wishes to thank Shri B. Sundaresan Iyer, Commissioner, and Shri Swaminathan, Deputy Commissioner, Hindu Religious and Charitable Endowments, Madras, for arranging permissions to work at the various temples. Suneet Divecha proved to be both an efficient assistant and delightful travelling companion. As ever, the staff of *Marg* have made every effort to publish a volume of the highest standards. Without the gracious co-operation of all these individuals, this volume would not have been possible.

George Michell
Bharath Ramamrutham



Map of Southern India, now divided among the four states of Karnataka, Andhra Pradesh, Tamil Nadu, and Kerala. After the map prepared by Graham Reed for George Michell, ed., *Living Wood: Sculptural Traditions of Southern India* (Bombay: Marg Publications, 1992), p. 2.

INTRODUCTION



Tiruchirapalli, Rock Fort, overlooking Kaveri River, as viewed from Srirangam Island.

George Michell



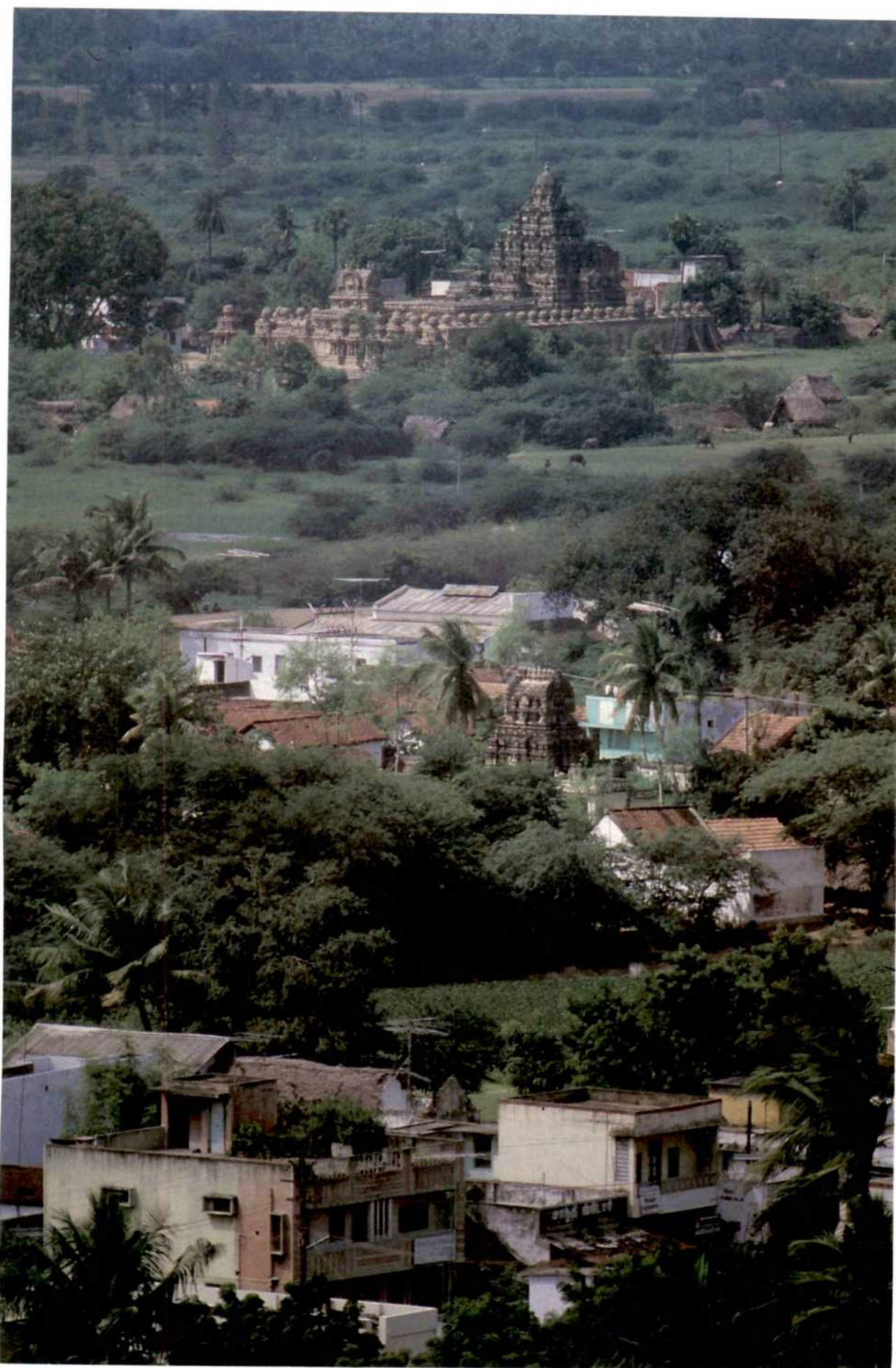
THOUGH religious traditions in Tamil Nadu may be traced back to the shadowy world of prehistory, little is known about temple building in the region prior to the seventh and eighth centuries AD. At this time Kanchipuram was the capital of the Pallavas, rulers of the northern part of the Tamil country; many of the temples that still stand in the town, including the Kailasanatha and Vaikuntha Perumal, are royal foundations bearing the names of the Pallava kings.

Under the Cholas, the most influential monarchs of the Tamil zone in the eleventh and twelfth centuries, a number of sites in the Kaveri delta were built up as dynastic shrines. One of the most important of these, the Nataraja sanctuary at Chidambaram, was set within a great square compound, entered through gateways with pyramidal towers, known as *gopuras*, in the middle of each side. The invention of this particular feature, which came to dominate all subsequent temple architecture, is credited to the Cholas.

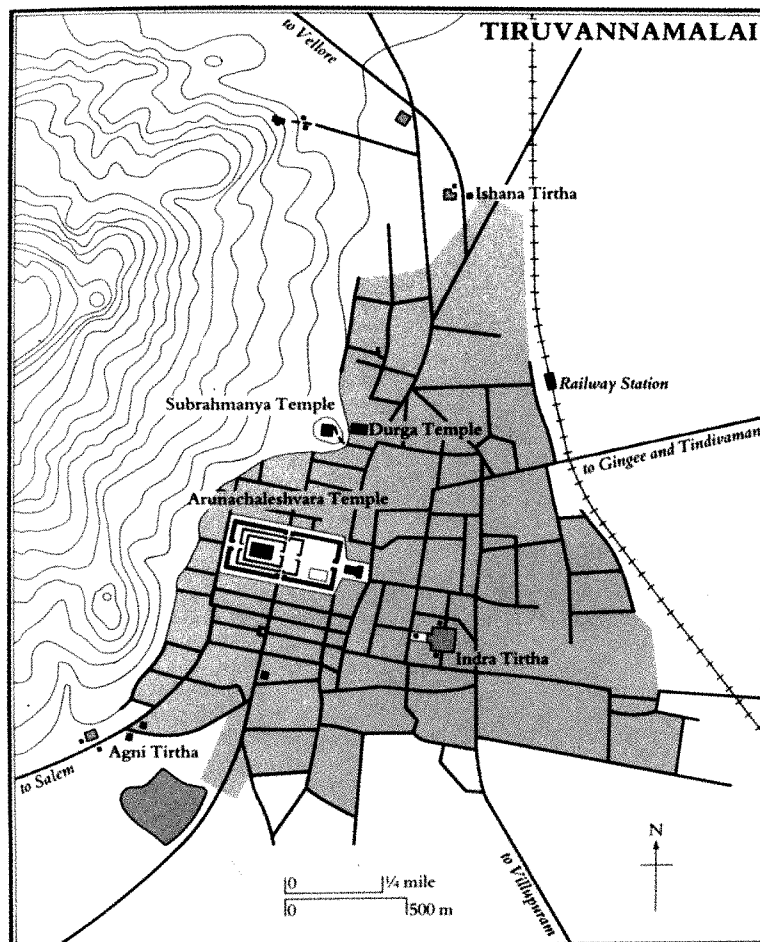
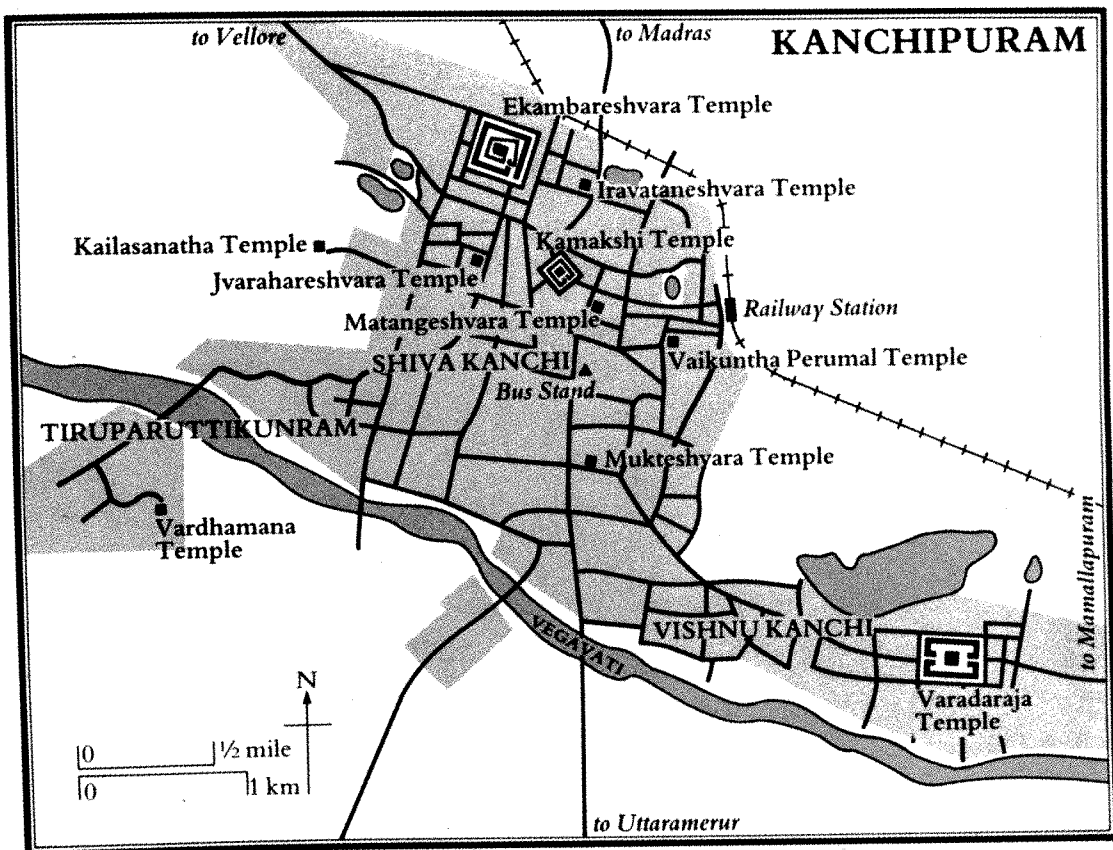
The Pandyas, who were governors of the southernmost part of the Tamil country, were contemporaries of the Cholas. Their principal place of worship was the double sanctuary of Minakshi-Sundareshvara at the core of their capital city, Madurai; it, too, was contained within four great walls, each with a soaring *gopura*.

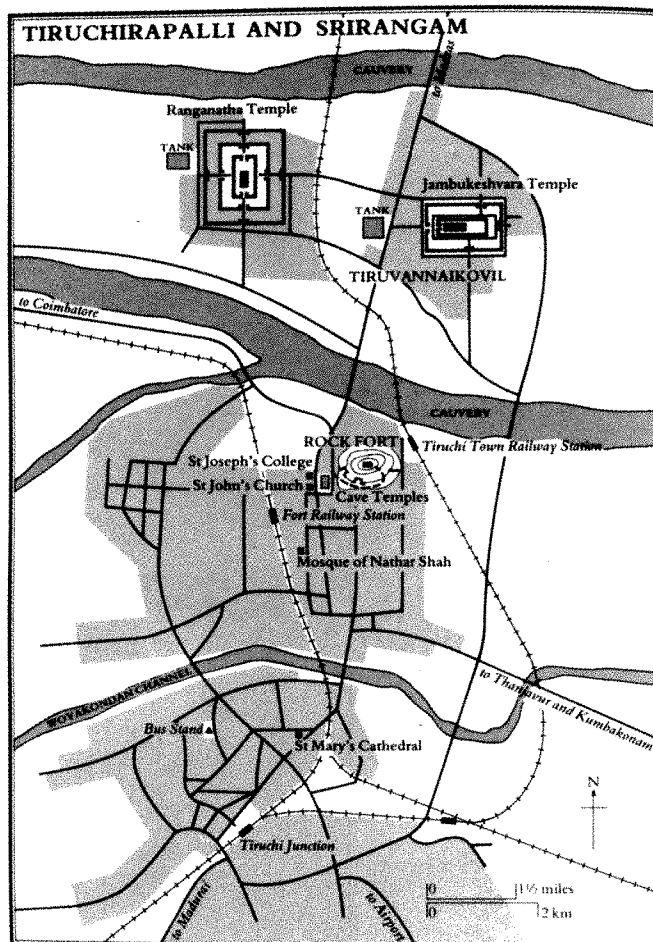
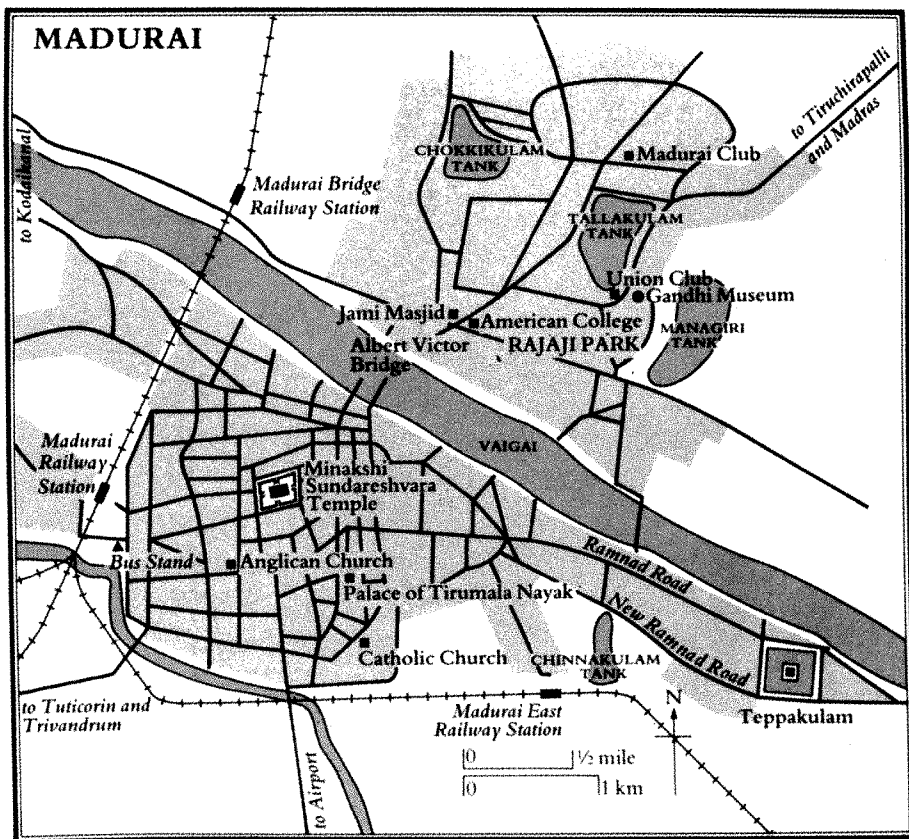
Patronage of religious architecture came to an abrupt end with the invasion of South India by the army of the Delhi sultans at the beginning of the fourteenth century. Within just a few years the conquerors established themselves at Madurai, which became the capital of an independent line of sultans. But this proved to be only an interregnum. The foundation of the Vijayanagara kingdom, with its capital on the bank of the Tungabhadra River in the Kannada zone, some six hundred and fifty kilometres to the north, signalled the resurgence of indigenous power; by the end of the fourteenth century the Madurai sultanate had been abolished and virtually all of South India was incorporated into the new state. Despite the martial nature of Vijayanagara, which soon assumed the proportions of an empire, its rulers embarked upon a systematic programme of temple repairs. Kumara Kampana, son of the king Bukka, was commander of the Vijayanagara forces in the Tamil country; in 1371 he ordered the re-installation of images in the Ranganatha shrine on Srirangam Island, so that ceremonies could once again take place there.

The consolidation of the Vijayanagara empire in the fifteenth and early sixteenth centuries brought about an unprecedented period of stability and prosperity. The viceroys of the Tamil provinces were tireless sponsors of religious foundations, renovating and extending almost all of the monuments in the region. The emperors, too, were a presence in the Tamil zone, through which they regularly made tours, pausing to pay homage to important deities. Among the sanctuaries visited by Krishnadeva Raya on his campaign in 1516-1517 were those at Kanchipuram, Tiruvannamalai, and Chidambaram; major constructions at these sites testify to his generous benefactions. The monumental scale of this emperor's additions may be judged from the soaring *gopura* that serves as the principal entrance to the Tiruvannamalai complex, and which bears his name. But Krishnadeva was not merely content with funding buildings and leaving inscribed records; he had a portrait sculpture of himself as a royal donor placed inside



Kanchipuram, distant view of town, fields, and the Kailasanatha temple.





the north *gopura* at Chidambaram.

Throughout the course of the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries, Telugu speaking warrior chiefs from the Eastern Ghats were appointed by the Vijayanagara emperors as governors, or Nayakas, of the Tamil country. Temple architecture benefited greatly from the patronage of the Nayakas who were anxious to ingratiate themselves with their subjects by sponsoring the cults of local divinities. Nor were the Nayakas adversely affected by the catastrophic events of 1565, when the Vijayanagara forces were defeated by the combined armies of the Deccan sultans; to the contrary, their power steadily increased. By the end of the sixteenth century the Nayakas had declared their independence from the later Vijayanagara emperors who were established at Chandragiri, in the southern part of the Telugu zone. By this time the Tamil country was divided into separate kingdoms, each with an autonomous line of Nayakas ruling from Gingee, Thanjavur, and Madurai; other towns such as Vellore and Tiruchirapalli served as subsidiary centres.

Without the overriding presence of the Vijayanagara rulers, the Nayakas often came into conflict with one another; even so, much of the country enjoyed periods of peace and fortune, especially in the first half of the seventeenth century. Temples were expanded on an unprecedented scale due to the sustained sponsorship of royal patrons, their family members, commanders and ministers. Tirumala Nayaka was one of the outstanding personalities of the era. His ambitious remodelling of the Minakshi-Sundareshvara shrine at Madurai, as well his additions to other temples in the vicinity, are unmatched in elaboration and splendour. Typical features of Nayaka architecture, as can be seen in many of the monuments illustrated here, are the spacious columned halls aligned with temple sanctuaries, often with donor sculptures of courtly figures sculptured onto the central piers. Massive *gopuras* of ever-increasing heights, some too grandiose to be completed, served as entrances to sacred precincts. Nor were such ambitious constructions necessarily confined to shrines at the Nayaka capitals: self-supporting religious institutions with their own revenues, as at Kanchipuram and Srirangam, also sponsored major building works. It is during this period that the Ranganatha complex at the latter site was substantially enlarged, its *gopuras* marking the entrances to a sequence of seven enclosures.

The efflorescence of temple patronage in the Tamil country was interrupted by a series of invasions towards the end of the seventeenth century, at first by Maratha warriors, then by the Mughal army. The results were drastic: the Gingee citadel was lost, and Thanjavur became the capital of the breakaway Maratha kingdom. Royal patronage was reduced to a minimum, though temple centres like Kanchipuram were able to continue their building programmes. The Madurai kingdom was comparatively less influenced by these dislocations, probably because of its extreme southerly location; even so, by the beginning of the eighteenth century it had fragmented into smaller principalities. Rulers at Pudukkottai, Ramanathapuram, and Tirunelveli, originally feudatories of Madurai, were able to support constructions on the grand scale of their predecessors, as the renovations of the Ramanatha shrine on Rameswaram Island testify. The course of the eighteenth century witnessed an overall decline in temple building, with the wealth of the region passing increasingly into the hands of the British. Some

institutions however, managed to retain their income and continued to sponsor major works down to the present day, as is demonstrated by the lofty *gopura*, marking the southernmost entrance to the Srirangam complex, completed only in 1987.

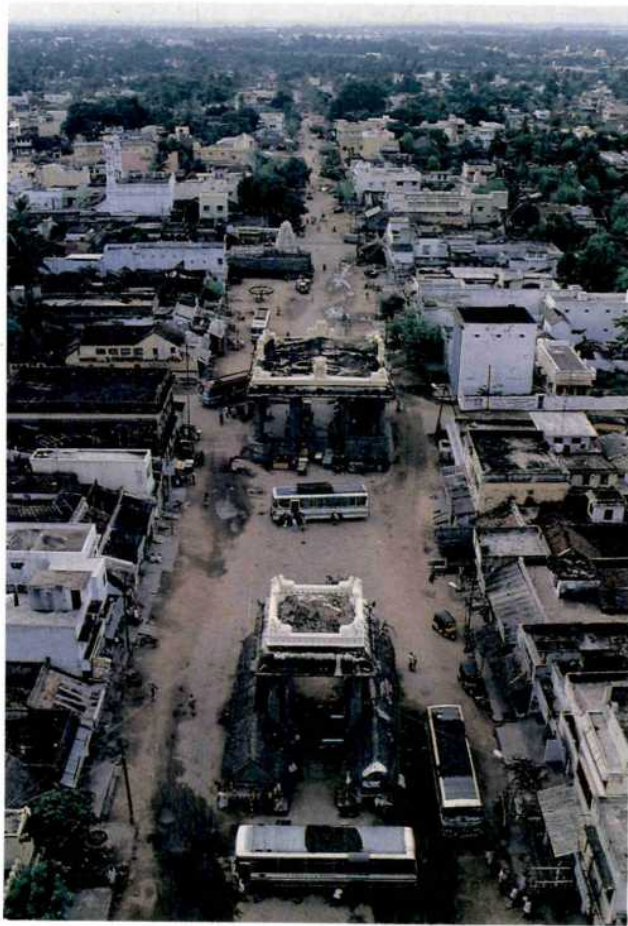
URBAN CONTEXT

It is difficult to separate the growth of religious architecture in the Tamil country from that of the towns; both developed in parallel formation. Traditional South Indian texts on architecture state that towns, especially dynastic capitals, required a major shrine to house the protective god or goddess of the ruler and his subjects; this divinity was directly responsible for the welfare of the town and its population. That such temples were actually erected is evident in towns throughout the region. In most instances, shrines to tutelary deities formed the core of the urban fabric, with crowded streets and markets clustering around the outer walls; the layout of these urban elements was often influenced by the geometry of the sacred complex itself. Madurai is a typical example: the almost square compound of the Minakshi-Sundareshvara complex regulates the overall pattern of the city, with streets running parallel to the walls on four sides, and leading directly towards the gateways that soar above the houses. Other temple towns, such as Mylapore (Madras), Tirukkalikundram, Tiruvannamalai, Chidambaram, and Tirunelveli, are variations of this basic model. Srirangam is perhaps the most perfectly realized scheme of all, with seven concentric enclosures encompassing an area of more than sixty hectares, thereby incorporating most of the urban population.

But not all temple towns in the Tamil country conform to such highly regular configurations, with street layouts dominated by single, focal sanctuaries. Kanchipuram and Kumbakonam, for instance, are quite different: their overall urban patterning reflects the simultaneous development of a number of separate cult centres, each serving as the nucleus of a distinct, sub-urban quarter. These multiple places of worship accommodate deities who give identity to a particular locality and its population. Roads are generally functional links between the different neighbourhoods rather than components in a strictly geometrical plan.

Many towns and cities in Tamil Nadu came into existence as complements to the construction of temples at well-established holy spots. River sites were of particular significance in this regard, as is demonstrated by towns that grew along the Kaveri and its tributaries in the heart of the Tamil country. Dominated by the rock fort of the Pandyas, Tiruchirapalli is located immediately to the south of Srirangam Island with its two great complexes, one dedicated to Ranganatha, already mentioned, the other to Jambukeshvara. Riverside temple sites, such as Kalahasti on the Svarnamukhi, in the adjacent Telugu zone, and Srivaikuntham on the Tambarapani, in the extreme south of the Tamil zone, were population centres of some significance, though never towns in their own right.

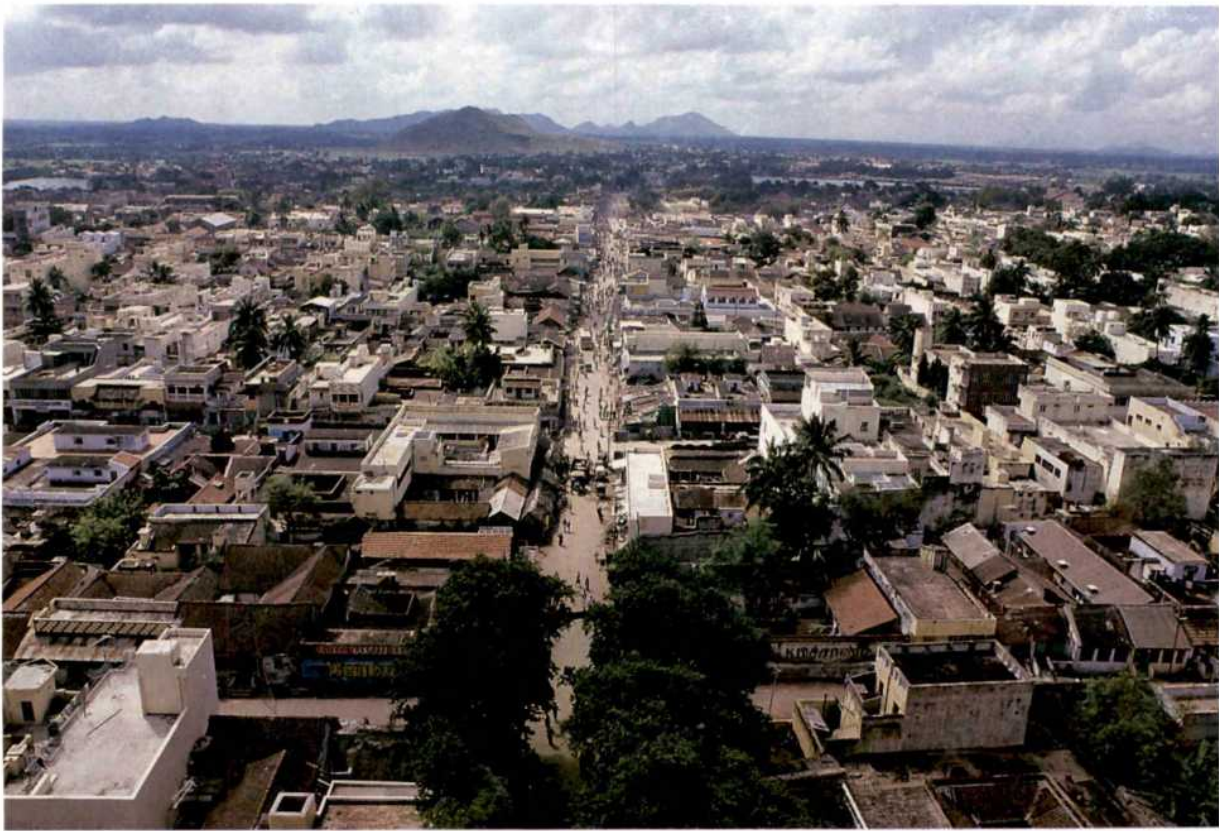
Cults associated with sacred mountains also determined urban locations. Tirupati was founded as an adjunct to the Venkateshvara temple at Tirumala in the wooded hills of the Eastern Ghats immediately north of the Tamil country. This



Kanchipuram, south axial street leading to Ekamranatha temple.



Kanchipuram, the tank of Ekamranatha temple and view of the town.



Tiruvannamalai, south axial street leading to Arunachaleshvara temple.



Chidambaram, view of streets and houses from east *gopura* of Nataraja temple.



Chidambaram, Nataraja temple, commercial street leading to east entrance.

shrine was developed by the later Vijayanagara Rayas into a major dynastic centre; indeed, the citadel at Chandragiri, already mentioned as the residence of the later emperors, was barely ten kilometres away. Rocky outcrops in the hinterland of Madurai, particularly Alagarkoil and Tirupparankundram, became places of major structural activities under the Nayakas. Little remains of any settlement at Alagarkoil other than the expanding walls and gateways of the sacred precinct; Tirupparankundram is still a flourishing town. Tiruvannamalai owes its existence to the steep rocky hill that rises to the west of the town. Arunachaleshvara, or Red Lord, the aspect of Shiva worshipped in the temple at the foot of the hill, is named after the spectacular bonfire lit each year on its summit.

The most important temple towns in Tamil Nadu have always had a commercial identity: religious centres were, and still are, market towns with festivals coinciding with great fairs. The simultaneous growth of pilgrimage and trade is an outstanding feature of urban life in the region. Kanchipuram provides an excellent example of a significant religious-commercial centre dealing in locally woven textiles and other goods. Festivals in temple towns are generally sensational events that also benefit business. Processions take place in the streets, in full view of crowds of visitors who pay homage to gods and goddesses before proceeding to the business of buying and selling. Structures located on axis with temple gateways are often reserved for commercial activities. Each of the larger religious complexes at Kumbakonam, for instance, is approached by a long colonnade that functions as a market, thronged with merchants and customers. The main street in front of the eastern *gopura* at Tiruvannamalai has a free-standing, lofty hall sheltering a variety of stores. The broad thoroughfares approaching the principal gateways of the Kanchipuram temples are lined with shops and stalls. Markets sometimes even invade the sacred precinct; the columned halls of the outer enclosures of the Madurai complex, for instance, are almost entirely inhabited by shopkeepers and their wares.

SACRED SPACE AND URBAN SPACE

The main purpose of religious festivals in Tamil Nadu is to extend rites and ceremonies beyond temple walls so as to permit an interaction between sacred space and urban space. The highly ordered movement of people and deities through the streets, which is the basis of most public ceremonies, forges links between the focal monument that stands in the middle of the town and the lesser shrines of the sub-urban quarters, and sometimes even the sacred spots in the countryside beyond. Patterns of movement are only partly governed by the physical layout of the town itself; a conceptual dimension is always present that is dictated by an abstract spatial model. The most important spatial model for temple towns, as has already been shown, is the diagram composed of concentric arrangements of squares. This serves as a mandala, expressing in geometric form the essential structure of the universe. The layout of sacred complexes on mandala plans, as is usual in most of the temples considered here, is a means of investing sacred space with cosmic meaning. The continuation of this patterning into the



Madurai, Minakshi-Sundareshvara temple, tailors in Pudu Mandapa.



Kanchipuram, Ekamranatha temple, stall in outer colonnade.

urban fabric, with the streets and open spaces imitating the geometry of temple compounds, creates an urban mandala that provides a spatial and conceptual link between temple and town.

Religious rites also charge urban space with meaning. The clockwise circumambulation, or *pradakshina*, of a deity is ubiquitous. Worshippers within the temple precinct pay homage to the principal god or goddess by making an auspicious *pradakshina* of the central shrine: similarly, they honour different deities by making complicated clockwise itineraries through labyrinthine halls and corridors. Devotees of Ekamranatha (Ekambareshvara) at Kanchipuram make an auspicious round of the earth-linga representing the principal deity; they also circumambulate the mango-tree that grows in a rear court of the complex, thereby enacting one of the fundamental myths of the temple — the adoration of the earth-linga beneath the mango-tree by the goddess Kamakshi. In double temples, such as the Minakshi-Sundareshvara, visitors are compelled to make two *pradakshinas* in order to pay respect to both the god and goddess. Nor is this movement confined to worshippers; images of gods and goddesses are carried in palanquins from one part of the religious complex to the other, always in conformity to a prescribed round. Sundareshvara spends every evening with Minakshi, but first is ceremonially transported in a *pradakshina* around his own shrine before arriving at that of his consort.

Pradakshina ceremonies outside the walls of the sacred compound replicate those inside. Public progressions along the streets circumambulate the main shrine, expressing the radiating influence of the temple deity, thereby confirming in ritual terms the unity of sacred space and urban space. This is achieved in different ways in different urban settlements. In towns with regular configurations, such as those mentioned earlier, the focal monument is surrounded by regularly spaced, broad thoroughfares that serve as settings for spectacular parades of sacred images. In towns with irregular layouts, public processions create quasi-circular routes that establish a *pradakshina* around the core shrine. Similarly, the passage of gods and peoples through the towns, no matter how haphazard the actual street plan, helps to create a mental image of the town that conforms to a regular mandala scheme. This interplay between formal movement and conceptual urban models is a constant feature of religious life.

Circumambulatory paths in Tamil Nadu's towns are by no means confined to the streets immediately beyond the temple walls. Since the populated zone and even the surrounding countryside are considered extensions of sacred territory, various holy sites, or *tirthas*, throughout the landscape are also incorporated into the domain of the deity. These sites vary from small structures enshrining local divinities to bathing spots at nearby rivers and ponds. Rounds of *tirthas* are made by worshippers on particular occasions, generally in a clockwise sequence, thereby creating *pradakshina*-like routes. Some twenty-seven holy spots encircle the main hill at Tiruvannamalai, each with a shrine and a small tank. Pilgrims make a prescribed circumambulation of the hill by pausing at each of the sites, starting and ending with the worship of Arunachaleshvara in the main temple of the town. Nine ablution sites on the banks of the Kaveri are regularly visited by devotees to Srirangam Island, starting at the Ranganatha sanctuary in the middle, and moving

in a clockwise sequence from the north bank of the island to the south. Nor is this ritual movement beyond the town limited to worshippers; temple deities, too, make similar journeys. Minakshi and Sundareshvara are taken in procession to the boundary of Madurai, on the bank of the Vaigai River, where they are met by the deity of the Alagarkoil temple who is a form of Vishnu. This "celestial rendezvous" acknowledges the supremacy of Shiva and his consort.

This festival at Madurai is still the most important feature of religious life in the city. As originally developed by the Nayakas, it was intended to promote the power of Madurai, both as a capital and as a kingdom. Little wonder, then, that this and other such ceremonies served as public statements of might and influence, expressing the forces that radiated outwards to encompass the whole region. In this respect, temple rites within urban settings took on an almost political dimension, being an effective means of expressing the overlapping spheres of royal power and sacred power. While rulers were rarely confused with divinities, the ceremonies that paid homage to kings were identical in all essential respects with those appropriate for gods and goddesses. Ritual practices established an intimate connection between kingly and divine personalities. Public festivals in temple towns took on a particular importance in this respect since they proclaimed the dominant role of the rulers, who were themselves present on such occasions, not merely as spectators but also as active participants. Many of these festivals continue today in Tamil Nadu without their royal sponsors, a testimony to the vitality of religious traditions in the region, and the sustained wealth and influence of its temples.

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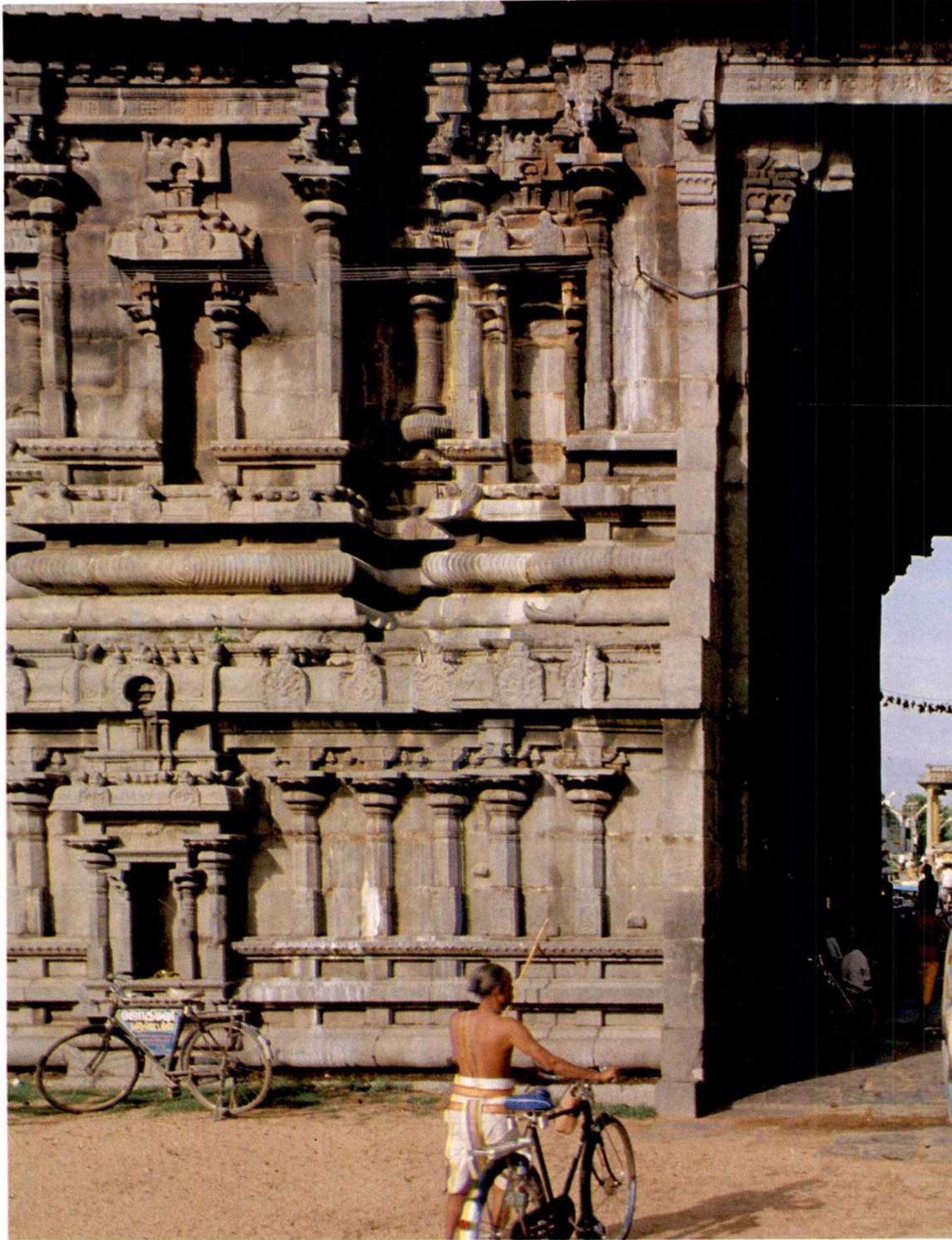
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LINE DRAWINGS

Town plans are reproduced by permission of Penguin Books Ltd., after George Michell, *The Penguin Guide to the Monuments of India, Volume 1: Buddhist, Jain, Hindu* (London: Penguin Group, 1989), pp. 435, 449, 476, 483.

KANCHIPURAM



Varadaraja temple, principal entrance from west, typical late Vijayanagara *gopura*.



KANCHIPURAM (or merely Kanchi) sustains an unbroken continuity with the ancient scholarly and religious heritage that once ranked it among India's seven most sacred cities, the only one south of the Vindhyas. Once the seat of an empire that reached far into South-East Asia, that cultural and religious heritage is sustained today not by palaces of the imperial king of kings but by palaces of the sovereign divine "King of the king of kings". The town is surrounded with fields on a flat plain and flanked on the south by the Vagavati River before it joins the Palar River flowing eastward into the Bay of Bengal. A relaxed mercantile busyness on the town's broad and long streets lined with closely built houses and stores suggests the prosperous streets of the imperial past.

Kanchi has been occupied continuously since at least the second century BC. Remains of a Megalithic culture are notable at its centre, an elevated portion of which supports ancient temples still in worship; and there is also evidence of trade with ancient Rome. A Tamil poem of probably the late second century AD describes the generosity of the enthroned king of Kanchi in his walled capital, and explicitly refers to two deities still housed in temples at the centre, the Kamakottam of the goddess (later Kamakshi) and the Urakam of Vishnu (Trivikrama, conqueror of the world) where massive brick remains of probably Buddhist buildings have been found. The poem also suggests the shrines of Skanda near the Kamakottam and of Vishnu (Krishna) in the Patakam temple west of the central elevation, and explicitly refers to Vishnu reclining in the Vehka temple south-east of the walls along the route to Kanchi's flourishing ocean harbour. These components of Kanchi's centre are still in existence and worshipped, although the Buddhist and Jaina structures have disappeared.

The poem views Kanchi's dynasty as distinct from the Cholas, Pandyas, and Cheras to the south and west. By the fourth century AD, however, Kanchipuram was the Pallava capital until the end of the dynasty five hundred years later. Positioned at the crossroads of land and sea trade, the Pallavas mediated culturally and religiously between North and South India, transmitting Indian civilization into Thailand, Cambodia, Java, and Vietnam. Their court was famous throughout India for its patronage of Sanskrit literature and of Buddhist, Jaina, Vaishnava, and Shaiva scholarship, rituals, and temples.

The Pallavas used the wealth generated by mercantile expansion to develop their sacred and busy harbour at Mamallapuram (Mahabalipuram), to expand the wall of the capital and its moat outward from the sacred centre, and to build new temples. When the dynasty ended, Kanchipuram continued as a vibrant sub-capital of the Chola and Vijayanagara empires. Between the tenth and seventeenth centuries (except for one raid by the Bahmani sultanate in 1481), temples continued to be patronized, expanded or newly built, though not without interruptions and periods of decay due to varying political fortunes. Along with the Kamakottam housing the goddess, two old temples received lavish patronage; in particular, the Ekamra shrine for Shiva north-west of the centre, and the Varadaraja shrine for Vishnu south-east of the centre. As the Vijayanagara rule declined and the British ascended to power, Kanchi's temples suffered, notably from the battles between Haidar Ali and the British in the late eighteenth century.



Kailasanatha temple, main shrine built by Rajasimha, the Pallava King.



Kailasanatha temple, Dakshinamurti, south-facing form of Shiva.



Vaikuntha Perumal temple, historical reliefs of Pallava rulers.



Vaikuntha Perumal temple, a priest decorating pillars with coloured garments.

Though the wall and moat of Kanchi have long disappeared and buildings now spill in all directions, the Pallava expansion oriented toward the centre guides the layout of the town even today. During the Pallava period, all temples within the walled city and in the enclave to the south-east were built so that icons in their sanctuaries faced the direction of the palace in the central zone now demarcated by two royal "Raja Streets". Alternatively, they were oriented toward the goddess near whom the palace stood. By the seventh century AD, the enclave south-east of the wall called Attiyur contained four icons all facing west, most notably Vishnu standing on a hill as "the king who graciously gives boons" (Varadaraja). Attiyur is now part of the town known as "Vishnu Kanchi".

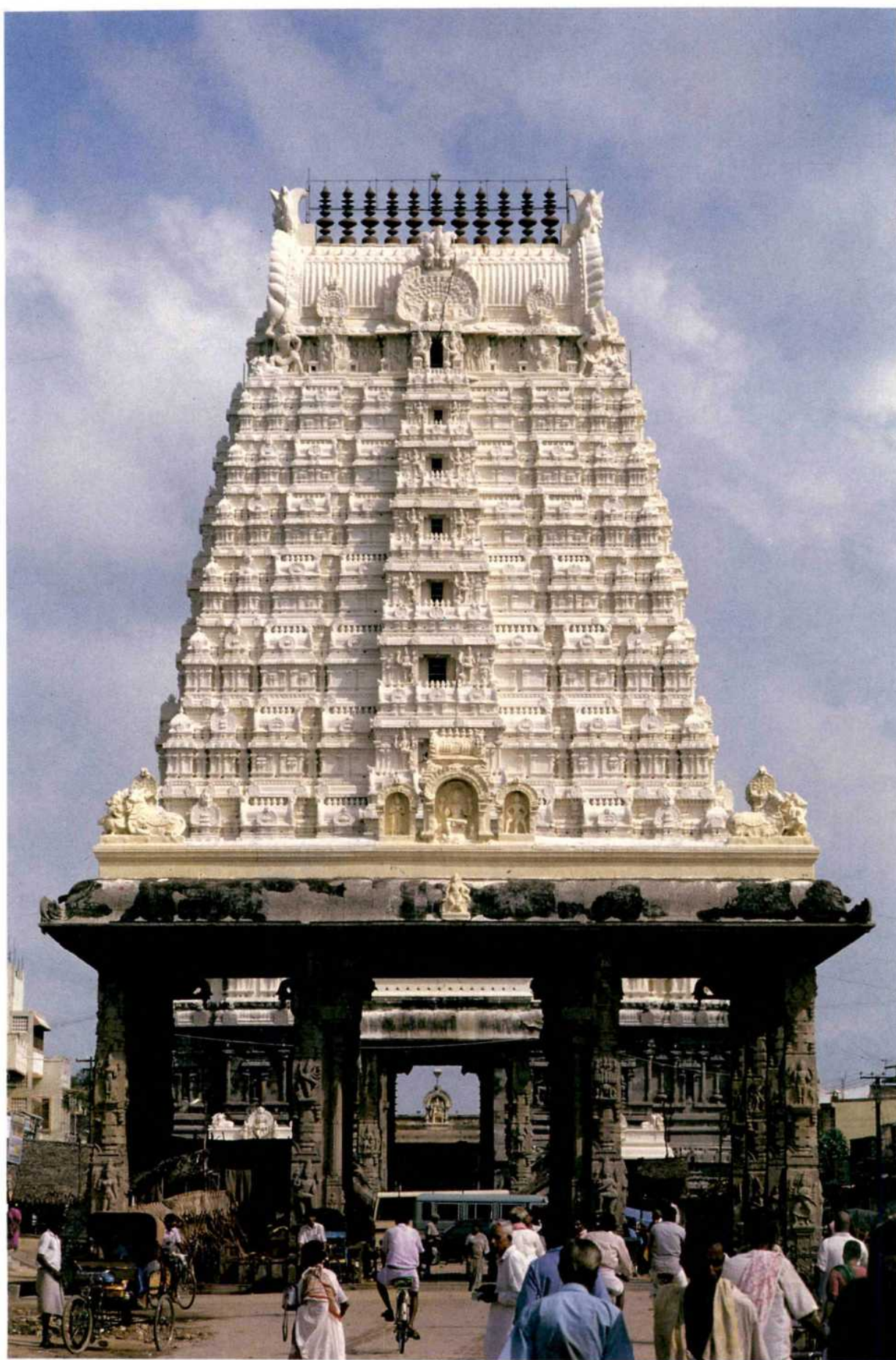
The same concern for orientation is found in Shaiva temples. In *circa* AD 600 the temple of Shiva's earth linga under a mango-tree (Ekamra) stood north-west of the central zone facing east (yet Chola and Vijayanagara expansions oriented the rest of it southward). Shiva, the goddess, and Skanda have given the central town the name "Shiva Kanchi". Pallava imperial temples on the west (Kailasanatha) and east (Vaikuntha Perumal) continued the focus on the centre throughout the reign of the dynasty.

TEMPLES OF THE CITY

The beauty and systematic complexity of the temples of the city as designed by the Pallavas at Kanchi are best seen in the two imperial buildings of the eighth century that are now archaeological monuments in worship. Each is a carefully planned whole divided into differing parts unified by the varied repetition of ideas and forms, not unlike South Indian classical music and dance.

The Emperor Rajasimha (AD 700-728) built the Kailasanatha temple as the palace for his lord Shiva (Rajasimheshvara). Rajasimha was viewed as analogous to Shiva's warrior son Skanda, and the portrayal of Shiva and the mother (Uma) sitting with the young Skanda in the middle (Somaskanda) repeats itself in various sub-shrines, each with a small tower, aligned along the wall behind the linga facing the doorway; other aspects of Shiva gaze inward from sub-shrines on the other two walls. A large bull (Nandi) recumbent on a destroyed *mandapa* (hall) fixes the east-west axis with his gaze toward the two and a half-metre tall, sixteen-faceted black stone linga hidden within the innermost sanctum located below the main *vimana*, or towered sanctuary. Garlanded with repeated rows of miniature halls with waggon-vault roofs and square aediculae, the *vimana* culminates in an octagonal cupola crowned with a jar-finial.

Nandi's gaze leads past eight small sub-shrines along the east wall through the gateway topped with a waggon-vault roof to a larger shrine built by Rajasimha's son, Mahendravarman III. It is fronted with two ritual structures that stand at the entrance and on the main axis of every temple, a small altar for sacrifices and a tall flag-pole. Sculptures inside its sanctum introduce aspects of Shiva repeated on the major *vimana*: Shiva as a begging ascetic (Bhikshatana) on the south wall, and Shiva performing the dance of destruction (Samhara-Tandava) on the north wall. Inside the rectangular compound the splendour of this most highly sculpted



Ekamranatha temple, with the recently painted south gopura.

Pallava temple reveals itself. All along the inside of the enclosing wall the sub-shrines repeat with variations, those on the south and north walls opening toward the east. Originally they were painted inside, probably with Somaskanda panels on the west walls, yet were also empty. Along the walls at the base of those cells over three hundred of Rajasimha's titles run clockwise, engraved in four different scripts.

The sides of the cells facing the main *vimana* depict stories of gods in a clockwise order corresponding to demarcated spatial directions. The linga inside the *vimana* signifies the Primordial Light, and the sculptures on the outside of the *vimana* depict the forms that Light takes as it transforms itself into the dark universe through self-imposed misperception. Sub-shrines on the *vimana* mark its cardinal and intermediate directions, the eastern direction replaced by the doorway into the inner sanctum. The sculptures facing each other across the courtyard at the cardinal directions were made especially noteworthy. Shiva as the south-facing teacher (Dakshinamurti) on the *vimana* appears to be instructing the four-faced Brahma gazing at him from the enclosing wall opposite and flanked by Durga. In the corresponding positions on the north, Shiva as the lord of yogis (Yogishvara) looking north is gazed upon by Vishnu with Shridevi and Bhudevi (goddesses embodying two attributes of Vishnu — wealth and the earth) flanked by Trivikrama. Expressing the subordination of Brahma and Vishnu to Shiva, those pairings encode theological, liturgical, and social issues in Pallava Kanchi.

Entrance to the sanctum by way of the *mandapa* and *vimana* doorway is a journey into darkness. Appropriate to deluded perception in the Kali Yuga (age of destruction), Light is seen as darkness and no light shines inside the sanctum except that of oil lamps used by a priest to show the faceted black glistening linga and the Somaskanda panel behind it. Flickering lamplight also reveals the liveliness of shadowed sculptures in adjacent shrines. Support for the enormous tower above created a double wall around the inner sanctum, which has left an unpainted hallway, now interpreted as an esoteric circumambulatory path.

The second imperial temple, the slightly later Vaikuntha Perumal, presents a smaller and more compact architectural experience. It is a sandstone mandala once brilliantly painted. Its focus is the towering, mountain-like *vimana* shooting up like the Flaming Light whose western wall extends to create an enclosed hall. When plugged up, a drainage "moat" surrounding the *vimana* and hall symbolizes the Ocean of Milk encompassing the blazing White Island where the god dwells. Surrounding that "moat" a covered circumambulatory path runs along the enclosing wall, its pillars carved with lions facing inward. A two-tiered sculpted history of the Pallava dynasty, from its origins in Vishnu down through Nandivarman II Pallavamalla who built the temple, runs clockwise along the circumambulatory wall. While circumambulating the *vimana*, Kanchi's history appears on the left; on the right is the *vimana* whose sculpted panels signify cosmography and Vishnu's acts as related in books one to six and eleven to twelve of the *Bhagavata Purana*.

That part of the temple is exoteric; the esoteric dimension begins with the sanctum. Filling it is the huge four-armed icon of Vishnu carved of black stone, seated as transcendent king (Vaikuntha Perumal) facing west. On the outer walls

of the sanctum at the cardinal directions are three seated sculptures surrounded by an enclosed hallway. Clockwise they depict the emanations (*vyuha*) from Vasudeva (Vishnu) seated in the sanctum: the snake-hooded Samkarsana on the north followed by Pradyumna on the east and by Aniruddha on the south. The esoteric dimension then extends upward to a second sanctum directly above where the black stone icon depicts Aniruddha asleep on the snake Samkarsana in the primordial waters of consciousness, permeated by Pradyumna who generates the desire for forms. The forms he dreams are sculpted on the outside of the sanctum as viewed by an outdoor circumambulatory path. The panels on the four sides signify patterns of time and significant rituals corresponding to the functions of the emanations and depicts stories drawn from books seven to ten of the *Bhagavata Purana*. Above this sanctum is a third without a circumambulatory path, no longer accessible. It once housed a standing icon, presumably of black stone, identified by an Alvar (saint) as Krishna the victorious lover.

The temple mandala may be understood in two ways. Exoterically, it moves from the centre outward as the seated Vasudeva of Light shines across the Ocean of Milk into dark human history on its border. Esoterically, the three vertical sanctums reverse that mandala. The progression upward signifies a move inward to the centre; it replicates Vasudeva's emanation of forms "inside" his own luminous being, ending with our dark world at his centre, where he appears as Krishna.

Compared with these Pallava temples, those developed by Chola and Vijayanagara patrons are now like architectural museums arranged by the fortunes of history yet according to a liturgical plan. The Varadaraja temple illustrates this vividly. The Cholas first rebuilt and expanded an older temple, creating three walled enclosures around a mandala. The mandala is an artificial hill nearly eight metres high and thirty metres square that appears to signify the high altar for a fire sacrifice. On top, a square that includes two walled entry porches and a circumambulatory path (now closed) signifies the altar of fire; the square sanctum signifies the square clay fire-pan in the altar's middle. The sanctum is the "womb" of the fire that is believed to hold the manifest universe within which the standing Vishnu appeared (just as he does on the top floor of the Vaikuntha Perumal mandala). A two-storey oblong tower of the waggon-vault type rises over the sanctum, renovated and replastered in the 1930s.

In 1053 the Cholas built (or rebuilt) the base of the "hill" on the east-west axis a low masonry sanctum fronted with a hall to signify a cave in the "hill", within which the icon of the man-lion (Narasimha) sits as yogi facing west. They encircled the "hill" with a double-storeyed cloistered verandah with colonnades of uniform pillars, creating an open courtyard with a Chola-style gateway on the west, broad, squat, and smaller than the central *vimana*. They then enclosed that entire area with a wall to create another gated courtyard in which they built a kitchen in *circa* 1100 and other buildings. Expressing growing dependence on Shakti (goddess of strength) in those centuries, they built a separate shrine for Shri Lakshmi (Perundevi Tayar) on the south-west facing her elevated husband (rebuilt *circa* 1487), and a hall for the unction rites of movable icons on the west along the central axis. By the early fourteenth century they had created an even larger open



Ekamranatha temple, showing the layout of inner enclosures.



Ekamranatha temple, sacred mango-tree under which Kamakshi worshipped the earth linga.

courtyard with an encircling wall to enclose the bathing tank and gardens, and topped its west gateway with a seven-storey tower in the late Chola or Pandya style in *circa* 1374. Counting the open area around the outer wall, the temple now possesses five courtyards encompassing the sanctum and entered from the west.

Vijayanagara rulers developed that area and in continuing devotion to Shakti built structures with minute carvings and extravagant embellishment, mostly in the early sixteenth century. They enclosed the first courtyard on top of the “hill” with a pillared verandah for circumambulation; in the courtyard below they built a shrine for the Malayala goddess and one for Andal, the poet-incarnation of Bhudevi; near the goddess in the next courtyard they built a large hall for the Navaratri festival and an intricately chiselled swing pavilion, and added shrines for the Alvars and Acharyas (teachers); and in the fourth courtyard they built an elaborately sculpted wedding hall or *kalyana mandapa*, of five hundred and seventy-five square metres on a two-metre high carved plinth. Among that hall’s ninety-six monolithic pillars, those of the interior display geometric designs and those on the exterior bear *yalis* (mythical leonine creatures) and rampant horsemen that depict Shakti’s manifestation as Vijayanagara’s military vigour (including European soldiers portrayed with firearms). Finally, even though the east entrance had little use, they gave it a slender fifty-metre gateway of nine storeys topped with eleven vase-finials.

RITUALS AND CEREMONIES

The guide of the liturgy of royal service is the *Agama*, revealed service of God in iconic form (*archa*) that subsumes the fire cult of the Veda. Vaishnava temples use either the *Pancharatra* or the *Vaikhyanasa*, each with its own canon of ritual texts. Shiva and Skanda temples follow *Shaiva Agama* and its *Shaiva Siddhanta* dominates their temples and *mathas* (monasteries). Worship of the goddess in the Kamakottam sanctum follows the Saubhagya Chintamani system of *Shakta Agama* as revealed by the sage Durvasa. Of all the temples, the Kamakottam is the most unusual ritually. The rites in its sanctum are addressed to the Shri Chakra *yantra* (mystical diagram) in front of the goddess image (not to the image) and confer the worldly welfare for which Kamakshi is popular. Yet that *yantra* is believed to have been installed by Shankara who renounced the world, as the knowledge (*vidya*) that pierces through to the absolute being expounded in *Advaita Vedanta*. The Kanchi Kamakoti Pitha Adipati headquartered in Kumbakonam has been the trustee of the temple since 1842.

The history of the Kamakottam, which may date from the earliest period, reflects increasing interest in Shakti in Kanchi. According to K. R. Venkataraman, the earliest Kamakottam still exists near the Skanda temple where a seated black goddess with matted hair holds a noose, goad, skull, and shows the gesture of fearlessness. On her plinth three crowned heads in low relief face a stone bowl inscribed with a *yantra*, now defaced. That image dates at least from the ninth century AD and its *yantra* may have been installed by the first Shankara when its bloody Kalamukha rites were performed. The new Kamakottam was built in the



Kamakshi temple, main courtyard with *kalyana mandapa* on the left.



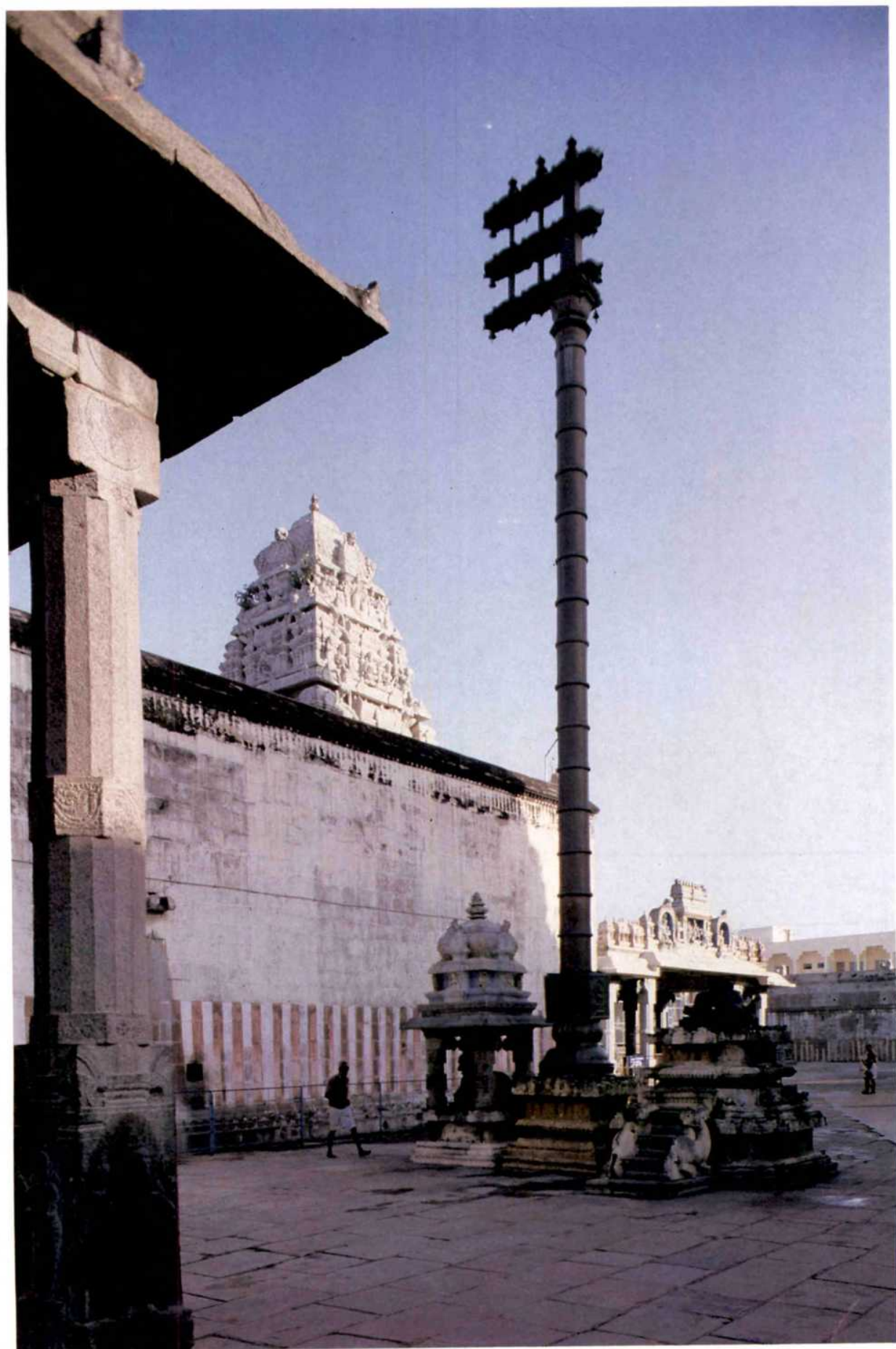
Priests browsing at stall outside the Kamakshi temple.

eleventh century amidst Jaina and Buddhist temples, some of whose images it incorporated, and its present disorienting layout began in the fourteenth century: standing in a pillared hall, the goddess faces east, yet must gaze at the main gateway through a small window in the enclosing wall; worshippers entering through the east gateway see the flag-pole and altar in front of the window, but must enter at the north. The present Shri Chakra *yantra* was installed in the sixteenth century and is represented by a pacified image: the enthroned four-armed Lalita Kamakshi holds a noose, goad, sugar-cane bow, and flower arrows.

The temples of Ekamra, Kamakshi, and Skanda are popularly thought of as forming a “Somaskanda” cluster, though they are independent temples with their own liturgies. Nevertheless, popular perception informs devotion, and stories in Kanchi tie all its temples together as the houses of gods belonging to a single extended family. According to one story, whose major events are depicted at Ekamra, the gods came there for specific liturgical reasons. Parvati once playfully closed Shiva’s eyes and threatened the universe, and was born on earth to perform ascetic *tapas* (penance) at Kanchi, where she made a linga of earth, under a four-branched mango-tree, which she served. In play, Shiva threatened to dissolve the linga by sending a flood from the Ganges in his hair, but Kamakshi’s companion, Kali, caught it in her skull bowl. When Shiva caused it to overflow from the skull bowl, Parvati’s brother Vishnu, who had appeared from the fire of Brahma’s sacrifice, appeared in his huge all-encompassing form to stem the flood. When he realized it was Shiva’s jest, Vishnu asked Shiva finally to bestow the fruit of her *tapas* on his sister. Kamakshi then embraced the earth linga to protect it from the flood and, inflamed by her touch, Shiva appeared to her as the lord of the mango (Ekamreshvara) and they married. That Shaiva-Shakta story neatly ties together the icon of Varadaraja, the huge stucco icons of Trivikrama and Krishna, the fierce and peaceful icons of Kamakshi, and Ekamra’s ancient mango-tree and earth linga.

The birth of Skanda the prince at the Kumarakottam is explained by a story in the *Lalita Mahatmya* appended to the *Brahmanda Purana* in which erotic desire (*kama*) is the issue. Kamakshi is Vishnu’s bewitching Shakti (Maya) who had emerged from a human sacrifice conducted by gods to defeat the destructive anger arising from the ashes of erotic desire that Shiva had burned up with his central eye of insight. After she, with eyes desiring Shiva (Kamakshi), married Shiva the destroyer of desire (Kameshvara), she destroyed Shiva’s anger arising from the ash of desire (Bhanda) and then re-embodied desire (Kama) so that he would stimulate the birth of Skanda to defeat Bhanda’s friend, Taraka.

The story apparently encodes tantric discipline. The yogi first divinizes his body and mind and enables insight to burn up his own ego-centred erotic desire. He then undergoes a ritual “death” through which Shakti emerges in his body. Using disciplined rites he then allows her to restore his own erotic desire and to use it to facilitate the conquest of obstacles to true perception within himself. Kamakshi signifies the potency of ritual action (*kriya-shakti*) to transform the yogi’s problem into its solution. Faith in Vishnu’s Shakti manifested through rites continues today, as the consecration of a new discus (*chakra*) shrine at Patakam in June 1992 attests.



Kamakshi temple, flag-pole on axis with main shrine.



Varadaraja temple, east *gopura*, used as a subsidiary entrance.

Like the *yantra* at the Kamakottam, Vishnu's discus (*chakra*) embodies *kriya-shakti*.

Liturgies at Kanchi today are attenuated versions of extravagant Vijayanagara elaborations based on the principle of reciprocity: the more wealth the resident Lord possesses, the more service he may receive; the more powerful he will be, the more he will bestow in return. Ideal devotion, however, serves for God's own pleasure and without thought of reward, and he has graciously appeared in iconic form for the sake of others. Many temples are not wealthy any more, but daily and periodical rites continue in all of these (and in more), each with characteristic variations of shared patterns. In each temple, the immovable icon in the inner sanctum may receive the services directly, or by means of small movable icons that extend the deity's presence elsewhere in the temple and outside on the streets. The movable icons bear their own titles and stories so that Vishnu or Shiva or the goddess in one temple may have various personae, as they do in the town, expressing liturgically the "monotheistic polytheism" of the *Agamas*. Variations in liturgical detail encode those stories. Since the linga in the Ekamra temple, for example, signifies an earth linga threatened by a flood, yet Shiva loves baths, the linga is covered with silver and is anointed with civet-cat oil, while the altar from which it emerges is bathed.

The most elaborate daily ceremonies, also shared at the huge Ekamra temple, are seen in the wealthy Varadaraja temple. Serving priests (*archaka*) approach Varadaraja five times a day: when he awakes in the early morning, at noon, at six o'clock, at eight o'clock, and at nine o'clock in the evening, after which he goes to sleep and the temple closes. All services are abridged portions of the early morning ceremony, which begins by invoking Vishnu's presence into the icon through mantras. The king is then bathed: a small silver icon is anointed daily, the immovable icon and the queen on Fridays, and the festival icons on six days of the month and on festival days. Dressed royally in clothes and jewels, he is fed and entertained with offerings of basil and mantras. Portions of the offered food are taken to the shrines of the Alvars and Acharyas (each with their own priests), but the man-lion and the queen receive separate offerings. Leftover food and water go as modes of divine grace to the priests and devotees present. At night the sequence closes when the king is put to bed. At the morning and evening ceremonies singers recite portions of Alvar hymns, fifty verses each day so that all four thousand of them are completed several times a year. (In Shaiva temples the hymns of the Nayanmars, Shaiva saints, are sung.)

During these ceremonies, devotees initiated into a *sadhana* (discipline) of worship will visit the temple and follow their doctrinal discipline (*samaya*), usually around sunset. Initiates into the Shaiva Siddhanta Samaya, for example, ideally will know that the palace symbolizes the body of a yogi on his back and corresponds to their own body. When they enter the gateway, they symbolically enter through the lowest part of the visible physical body, the feet. Inside the outer wall, they are in the invisible physical body at the base of the spine where the yogi halts normal consciousness by controlling breathing, a place signified by the flag-pole. The adjacent altar of sacrifice represents the binding matter (*pasha*) defiled by ignorance that the yogi's individual consciousness (*pashu*) will now go beyond in a journey up the spine to the head. The pacified bull Nandi ("happy")



Varadaraja temple, tank in outermost enclosure.

gazing on Shiva represents that consciousness and the various walls and courtyards enclosing the sanctum signify the material layers within the invisible body that it passes through. The inner sanctum corresponds to the centre of the yogi's forehead between the eyes where the visible and invisible material bodies link. The linga within is the Lord (*pati*) whom the yogi perceives standing there beyond both bodies, which means everywhere.

Behaviour appropriate to such a walk "inward" is governed by the etiquette of an imperial palace adjusted to gender and ability. Having bathed and dressed properly (women covered from the shoulders down, men from the waist down) and carrying a plate of offerings above the waist, ideal worshippers venerate Ekamra's south gateway. After entering they place both hands over the head, move to the altar of sacrifice, and prostrate at its south-east corner. Worshippers then circumambulate Shiva's sanctum at least three times through the courtyards, thinking steadily of him and watching carefully lest they step on an insect. The direction of circumambulation depends on the intent of the visit, most commonly clockwise, the direction signifying emanation of the world and enjoyment of it. Unmarried devotees should walk clockwise; householders and retired meditators should walk both clockwise and counter-clockwise, the direction of the world's devolution and emancipation from it; renunciant ascetics should walk only counter-clockwise.

Once prepared to pass to the sanctum, worshippers venerate the door guardians with joined hands and ask Nandi permission to enter so that they may receive the fruits of having seen the Lord. Without walking between Nandi and Shiva, they go to Ganesha (son of Shiva and Parvati), remover of obstacles, gaze at him and visualize him while (in apparent self-abasement) they knock their fists to their foreheads three times, pull each ear down three times with the opposite hand, and praise him. Placing both hands on their heads they then go to the sanctum where Shiva resides as the earth linga and as Somaskanda on the back wall. While they gaze at Shiva through the doorway (as he gazes upon them), the ideal worshippers will visualize him while their mind dissolves, their body hair stands on end, and joy wells up and overflows within them as they sing a Tamil hymn of praise. They then present their offerings through the priest standing inside the sanctum (bael leaf, fruit, burning camphor, and so forth), concluding with a ritual gift to the priest that transfers the fruits of his acts on their behalf to them.

Having worshipped the Primordial Light, they now worship its emanations in the sanctum area — Dakshinamurti, Somaskanda, Chandrashekara (Shiva as Lord of the moon), Subrahmanya (Skanda), and others — and the Acharyas who transmitted the *Shaiva Agama*. Next they approach the sanctum of Parvati and perform appropriate rites for her with offerings. They conclude their worship-through-vision (*darshana*) by applying Shiva's sacred ash to their bodies and approaching the shrine of Chandeshvara, the keeper of accounts. With three claps of the hand they ask him to give them the fruits of *darshana*. Returning to Nandi they venerate him, prostrate at the altar of sacrifice, and sit down facing north to visualize Shiva while uttering his five-syllable mantra (Namah Shivaya) repeatedly. Free to go home, they take care not to have their backs facing either Shiva or Nandi. According to the *Agamas*, such visual worship with true devotion

at daybreak removes the sins of the night; at midday, sins committed from the day of birth; at evening, sins committed during seven births. Worshippers may remove unintended ritual mistakes by reciting the Rudra or Aghora mantras.

FESTIVALS

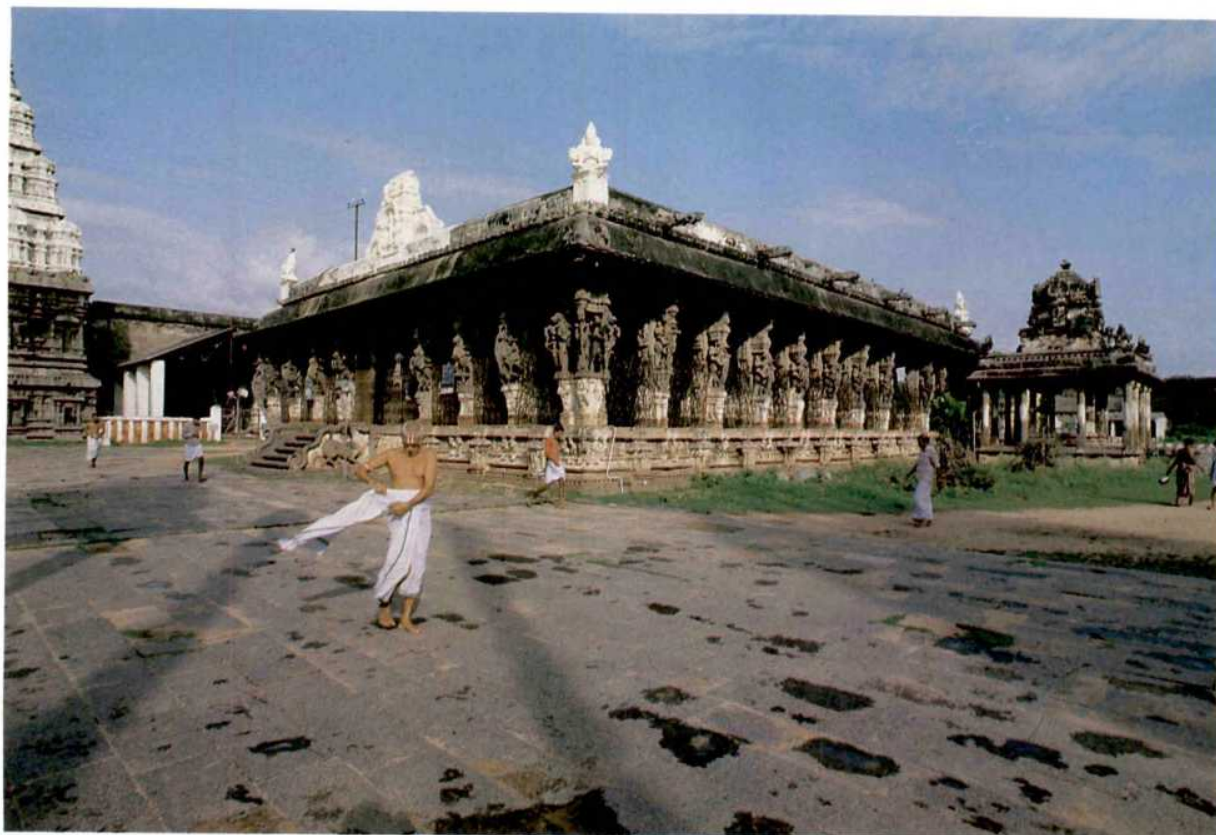
Added to such daily liturgies are festivals conducted throughout a deeply symbolic year. The year is divided according to the solstices and equinoxes (in Tamil Nadu these periods are observed about three weeks after the celestial events), each of which is thought of as a day in the life of the gods: the winter solstice is sunrise and the summer solstice is sunset; the month before the winter solstice is "Brahma's hour" at the end of night when gods (like humans) arise to prepare for their own worship of the king. During the "day" the major events in the life of the resident royalty and leading saints and teachers occur, as do rites of the life-cycle, personal vows, and celebrations of life of resident subjects.

Each temple at Kanchi celebrates one festival grandly as an identifying "Brahma festival" or *brahmotsava*, the interesting events for most people being morning and evening processions of the king and queen in gorgeous attire, carried in ornate vehicles illustrating their stories. The sequence remains the same year after year, yet some temples print broadsides to publicize the processions and the townsmen who sponsor them.

The "sunrise" of the winter solstice is celebrated at home with the two-day Pongal festival beginning on the first day of Tai (usually January 14), a time to venerate the sun and cattle and to renew social ties. The *brahmotsavas* of Kanchi then begin, all but one during the "day" time of the year (winter solstice to summer solstice). The theme of the early morning bath is found in the "sunrise" month of Tai, in the *brahmotsava* of the Urakam where Vishnu bathes in a tank. In the following month of Masi (February-March) the Kamakottam conducts its *brahmotsava*, and the Ekamra conducts its own in the next month of Panguni (March-April). On the tenth day of the festival coinciding with the constellation Phalguna Uttara, Shiva of the earth linga marries Parvati who embraced it under the mango-tree. Customarily, many couples belonging to various castes marry at the same time in the wedding hall of the temple, as subjects imitating their divine rulers.

Brahmotsavas skip Chittirai (April-May), the first month of the Tamil year, and then three occur in Vaigasi (May-June) in the "afternoon" of the gods' day: the *brahmotsavas* of Varadaraja, Vaikuntha Perumal, and Skanda in the Kumarakottam. Interestingly, Krishna's *brahmotsava* at Patakam accentuates the meaning of his name, "dark", though it is of course brilliantly colourful, since it takes place in the "darkness" after the "sunset" of Adi (July-August) as a ten-day festival which begins with that dark king's birthday in "dark" Avani (August-September).

Other important festivals also fall in the "night" of the year to re-enact events crucial to the "dark age" of history, the Kali Yuga. Beginning with the new moon in Purattasi (September-October) when domestic rites for the dead are enjoined,



Varadaraja temple, *kalyana mandapa*, with fine examples of late Vijayanagara sculptures.



Varadaraja temple, musicians circumambulating central shrine.



Varadaraja temple, *kalyana mandapa*, gods and warriors, the swing pavilion at the rear.

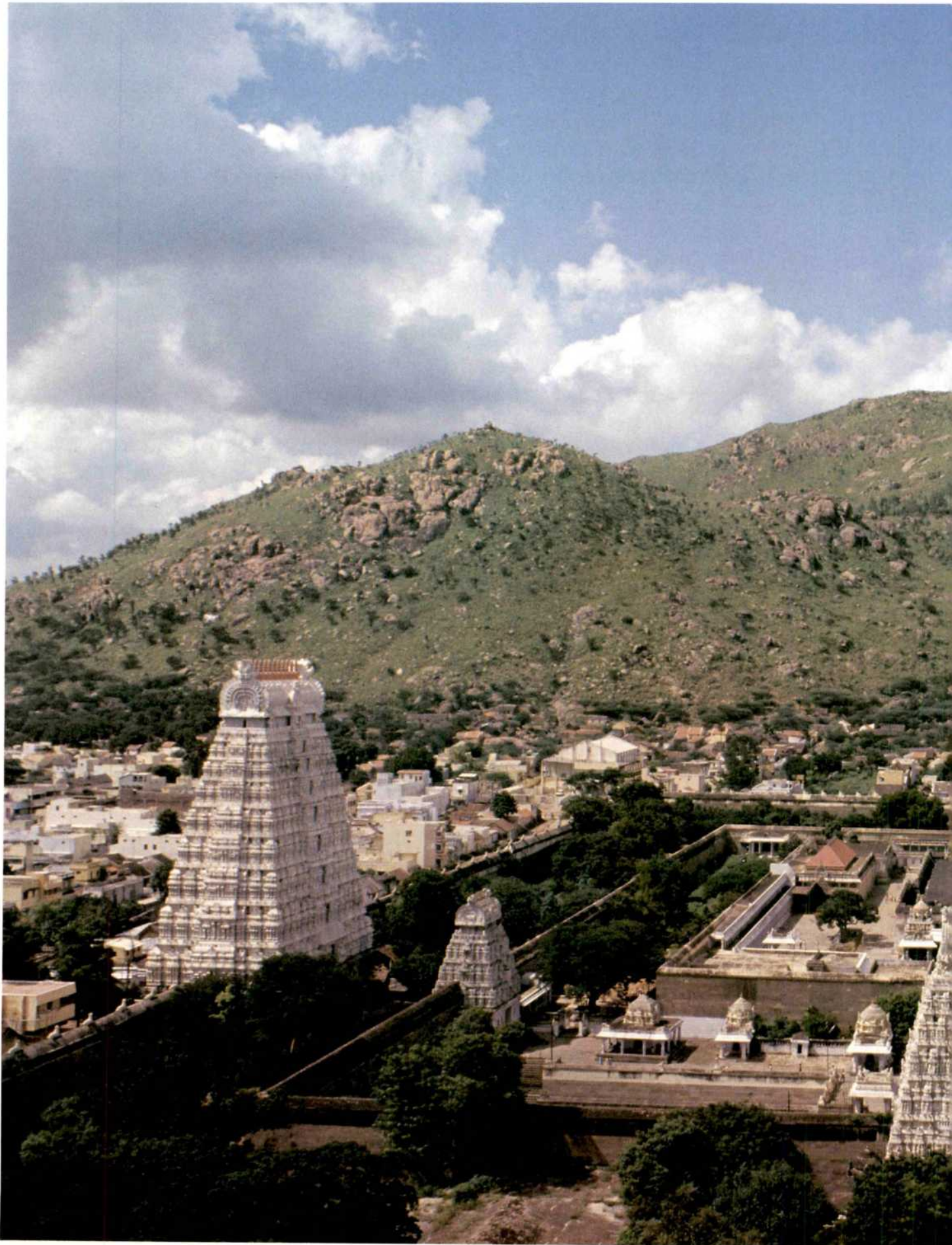
the Kamakottam celebrates with splendour the nine-nights (Navaratri) of the goddess's victory over dark demonic powers, as told in the *Devimahatmyam*. Each day, as the new moon waxes she receives offerings of songs while enthroned in a special hall and since 1985 has been worshipped on the "victorious tenth day" (Vijaya-dasami) with an especially potent unction of her through a golden pot and by her procession in a golden chariot. Similarly, she receives another special unction in the "row of lights" (Dipavali) festival falling on the next new moon in Aippasi (October-November). Seven days later, her son Skanda's birth, defeat of Taraka, and marriage all in six days are celebrated in the Kumarakottam. Between the even "darker" new and full moons that follow in Karttigai (November-December) numerous lamps appear on Kanchi's temples at night.

Margali (December-January) ending the "night" time of the year signifies the predawn hour of meditation on revealed knowledge. Accordingly, temples enact significant moments of revelation that month. On the day of the full moon, at the Ekamra temple, the important Ardra unction is performed on one day. The dance of Shiva is presented as worship the following sunrise, with singing and celebrations of the Shaiva Saint Manikkavachakar's *Tiruvempavai*. In the Varadaraja temple the entire Alvar canon is recited in front of Vishnu, the Alvars and Acharyas, beginning on the first day after the new moon for ten "day" times and continuing from the eleventh for ten "night" times, when Nammalvar's *Tiruvaymoli* only is recited. In Margali mornings the revelatory *Tiruppavai* and *Tiruvempavai* may be heard on Kanchi streets arousing devotion at the beginning of a new day and a new year.

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TIRUVANNAMALAI



Arunachalesvara temple, dominated by the hill, at the summit of which the annual fire ritual takes place.



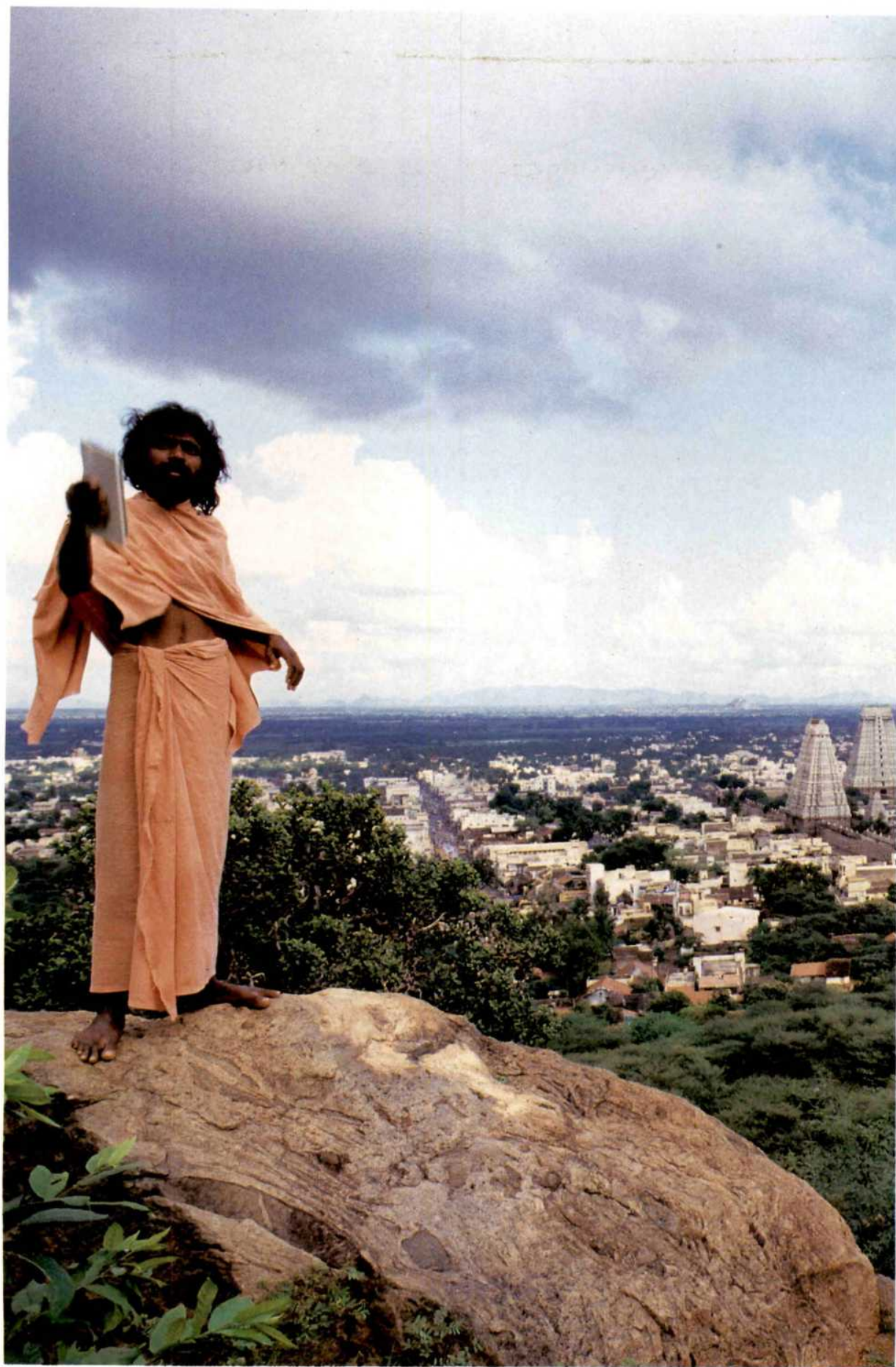
SHIVA has long been identified with Agni—fire; in the Puranas he appears as a column of fire before which Brahma and Vishnu must admit defeat, a modified version of the ancient theme of the *Kenopanishad*, in which Brahman manifests as the supreme divinity before whom Agni and Vayu must bow. Because of this long tradition linking Shiva with fire, and of the five lingas of the elements (earth at Kanchipuram, water at Tiruvannaikoil, ether at Chidambaram, air at Kalahasti), the fire linga at Tiruvannamalai is the one whose myth is most consistent and has most resonance in the religious-geographical symbolism of Tamil Nadu. This site, mentioned as early as the seventh century in the songs of the Nayanmars (Shaivite saints), continued to develop considerably up to the Vijayanagara period; on an eighteenth-century map the surface occupied by the temple represents one-fifth of the total area of the town.

At first sight Tiruvannamalai does not seem a very suitable spot for the development of a major centre: the town stands in an infertile plain that is punctuated by isolated hills (inselbergs) and piles of crumbling rocks devoid of vegetation. Nevertheless it was a favourable position, at a crossroads connecting different regions. Already by the Sangam period, in the first centuries of the present era, the north-south route from Kanchipuram to Karur passed close to Tiruvannamalai; another major road from east to west, passing through the Chengam Basin, also led to Tiruvannamalai. In addition, water draining off the rocks and inselbergs could be collected in tanks and used for irrigating crops. Thus a settlement grew up at the foot of one of these inselbergs, one which according to tradition embodies the column of fire from which Shiva emerges.

This mountain, or rather hill, an isolated cone eight hundred metres high that is visible for twenty kilometres around, organizes the geographical, social, and symbolic space of Tiruvannamalai (*malai*, or mountain, hill). This visual focal point is the emblem of the place; it is depicted on stones marking the boundaries of temple lands as an equilateral triangle filled with semicircular incisions resembling rocks. The mountain also figures in the iconography of the deity in a form not mentioned in iconographical treatises that is unique to Tiruvannamalai, the *Adi Mudi* or “high and low”: these are the words used by the Shaivite saints when singing of Brahma’s and Vishnu’s vain attempts to reach the crown and the feet of Shiva the Vast. The *Adi Mudi* is a slab set at the centre of small shrines. It is carved on both sides: the front surface bears Shiva and Parvati, while the back, visible from the rear niche of the shrine, shows a linga against a background of semicircular lines symbolizing the mountain. This iconography is a perfect illustration of the double aspect of the divine manifestation: on one side (the linga against the mountain), the god as a yogi; on the other side (with Shiva and Parvati in human form), the god with his Shakti, Parvati.

BIPOLARITY OF THE SITE

A bipolarity appears between the site of present-day Tiruvannamalai and several villages situated in the immediate vicinity to the east. In these villages, the west, together with Tiruvannamalai and its mountain, is referred to as *kadu* (forest,



Pilgrim on rock, high above the Arunachaleshvara complex.



Arunachalesvara temple, series of *gopuras* decreasing in height from outermost to innermost enclosures.

waste or uninhabited land); and the villages claim rivalry with the town as the former royal seat of the Hoysala king, Ballala III (early fourteenth century). Although there is no archaeological trace of this, and opinions vary about exact locations, two of the annual temple festivals do seem to confirm this claim. A few weeks after the announcement of the death of King Ballala during the festival of Tai Pusam (January-February), in the course of another festival, Masi Magham, Shiva is crowned king at the Arunachaleshvara temple in Tiruvannamalai in the absence of a royal heir. It is for this purpose, revealingly, that he comes to Pallikondapattu, one of the eastern villages where King Ballala's palace is supposed to have stood. In addition, when the deity is carried around the mountain in the course of the festival of Tiruvudal (the god's quarrel), it is on the west side of the mountain, in the least settled area, that his jewels are stolen. Significantly, it is to the east, at Kilnattur, a village of cultivated fields, that he recovers the jewels.

In addition to these festivals which show a long-standing distinction between these eastern villages and the mountain, the configuration of the town of Tiruvannamalai itself seems to show that originally there was only a small sanctuary at the foot of the mountain, near the crossroads linking different regions (Chengam, Polur, Gingee). It is clear that as the town and the temple expanded—especially with the construction of the fourth and fifth temple enclosures—these roads were submerged in the urban structure; they now pass through the town along the square of "car-streets" around the temple. With the growth of the town and the temple the original opposition between the eastern villages and the mountain area has been displaced so that it now applies to the mountain and the town of Tiruvannamalai at its foot.

The town is contrasted to the mountain by a ritual demarcation of its limits during the *parivettai* (hunting) episode enacted twice a year during the ten-day festivals at the winter and summer solstices. One of these *parivettais* takes place to the north, not far from the temple of Durga (goddess), the other to the south, near the present hospital, two places which on the eighteenth-century map correspond to the limits of the town. During the *parivettai*, after a lamp-offering to Subrahmanya and the elephant who accompanies him, the deity aims his bow from his palanquin, while the elephant runs after a drummer and a torch-bearer, circumambulating Subrahmanya three times. This ritual mime represents a royal hunt on the uncultivated borders of the settlement. It is significant that the eastern limit of the town is not involved, probably because the oldest settlements in the area lay in that direction.

The contrast between the town as a settlement and the mountain as a wilderness disappears when their borders are overstepped by the ritual circumambulation of the mountain, which involves passing through part of the town: this is done in order to include the Shiva temple, which is both a duplicate and a substitute for the mountain which embodies Shiva. The uncultivated space around the foot of the mountain ceases to be undifferentiated when it becomes the path for the ritual circumambulation. It is ordered in two ways: as a mandala whose centre is the vertical axis of the mountain; and oriented by the distribution around the mountain of sanctuaries and ponds dedicated to the cardinal and intermediate points of the compass. The route is domesticated, punctuated with small shrines

erected by individual devotees, with resting-places for the deities and ponds nearby. When several of these elements are situated close together, they form something like "stations", where the deities pause in their processions to receive offerings. Moreover, this circuit is perfectly controlled and marked out. The total length of fourteen kilometres was demarcated in the thirteenth century by milestones in the name of the Pandya dynasty, bearing their insignia of a sceptre and two fishes as well as the number of the division of the route, starting from the temple. Thus one of the stones reads, "Hail! Prosperity! Way of Vikrama Pandya, 4th division." From the few milestones which have survived it has been possible to reconstruct the whole system of signs and to determine the measurement used. There were nine markers altogether, one for approximately every one and a half kilometres. This is the distance that can be covered during one *nali*, a time-distance unit of twenty-four minutes. So, three and a half hours were required to cover all the divisions, covering the total distance.

Although the temple at the foot of the mountain is identified with the mountain itself as its substitute, a distinction is made between the top and the bottom. In some areas the double nature of the god, both yogi and dispenser of wealth, is symbolized by one temple at the summit of the hill and another at the base. At Tiruvannamalai this complementary contrast is not expressed spatially, since there is no temple at the top of the hill, but by four annual ceremonies during which two rocky protuberances on the summit of the hill are worshipped as the feet of Shiva.

One of these ceremonies takes place at Shivaratri, the night of Shiva, when the god manifests as a column of fire; a few months later another puja takes place to celebrate the union of the god and the goddess by a marriage ceremony. In the later part of the year two more pujas are performed. One takes place at Karttigai (November-December), before the fire is lighted on the summit to commemorate Shiva's appearance as the column of fire; at this moment he is united with his Shakti (Parvati), as is signified by the Ardhanari dance in the temple courtyard. The last puja on the top of the mountain represents separation from the goddess, and a return to the manifestation of Shiva's supremacy.

TOWN AND TEMPLE

Tiruvannamalai is one of the major sacred places of Tamil Nadu. It is impossible to ignore this because of the great area occupied by the Shiva temple, the many processions, and the frequent festivals, especially that of Karttigai, the festival of fire, which more than doubles the population. This influx of pilgrims is received in *choultries* or hostels, most of which are situated in the north and south car-streets.

Another aspect of the temple which has determined the physical form of the town was the construction of the fourth and fifth enclosures. This important extension caused the relocation of residences, especially of brahmins (*gurukkal* priests, or *smarta* brahmins), who would usually live around the temple in the square formed by the four car-streets.

At Tiruvannamalai, the west car-street behind the temple has very few houses

because the mountain slopes upward almost immediately. The only *gurukkal* brahmin residences near the temple are those in the north car-street. As for the east and south streets, which follow the main regional highways, they are quite naturally crowded with shops, and also hostels for pilgrims, who thus benefit from the passing processions. For these reasons the *smarta* brahmin quarter was located relatively far away from the temple, almost at the old town limits, around the Ayyan Kulam or Indra Tirtha Tank.

Besides occupying a large area, the great temple radiates its influence throughout the whole town due to its connections with outlying tanks. The sacred bath which takes place at the close of each of the numerous temple festivals is performed either in one of the two temple tanks, or in one of the outlying tanks: Indra Tirtha, Tamarai Kulam, Agni Tirtha, and Ishanya Tirtha. The last two of these lie at the two extremities of the circumambulatory route around the mountain; that is, at the outer limits of the town, where the cremation grounds lie. For this reason they are used for ablutions after funerals.

In Tiruvannamalai the Shiva temple is omnipresent and all-powerful, so that there is no Vishnu temple. Apart from three abandoned Shiva temples, there are about a hundred temples to the goddess or to Ganapati. These are street shrines or community temples, all of which relate to the great Shiva temple. During their festivals the processions from these temples proceed through the four car-streets of the great temple. The final bath takes place, depending on the location of the temple, either in the Ishanya Tirtha to the north or in the Agni Tirtha to the south.

THE SHIVA TEMPLE

The temple today is the outcome of a millennium of building, alteration, and extension. The original enclosure containing the main shrine with its Shiva linga was enlarged eastwards, and gained the name of "second enclosure". What is now known as the "first enclosure" is in fact the platform around the shrine. This is a theoretical enclosure for ritual purposes, the enclosure being considered as the inner circle of Shiva's divine court, where the sub-shrine of Chandikeshvara (one who maintains accounts), receives the leftovers from Shiva's puja, is located.

The main shrine, made up of a cella and a vestibule, bears tenth-century inscriptions on its base, but above this there has been much remodelling. A square hall in front of the shrine, dating from the sixteenth century and containing Nandi, the bull, and Surya, the sun-god, is used for the first of the six daily pujas performed in the temple.

The second enclosure, originally without a roof but covered in the nineteenth century, is entered through a gateway known as the Rishi Gopura. Around its perimeter there are several deities, either free-standing or in small shrines. First, facing east, comes the temple's second Nandi; then in their obligatory position to the south stand the sixty-three Nayanmars and the Seven Mothers. On the west are Ganapati; Somaskanda (group of Shiva, Parvati, and Skanda), a bronze processional image in a small shrine; also in a shrine, Vishnu in the form of Venugopala (Krishna); then Gajalakshmi (goddess of wealth); and last,



Arunachaleshvara temple, tank in outermost enclosure.



Arunachaleshvara temple, steps leading down to the tank.

Subrahmanya with his consorts in a shrine. The south side has in addition to the bronze processional images of the sixty-three Nayanmars, Bhairava (Shiva in his fierce form); the bedchamber of Shiva and his consort; and the shrine of a processional bronze Nataraja (dancing Shiva).

Most of these shrines and images are not original, for rich temples undergo frequent renovations. Thus the original tenth-century Seven Mothers have been replaced by more modern ones; and Jyeshtha, the goddess of misfortune, also an ancient statue, now stands near a shop in the town, ousted from the temple in favour of Gajalakshmi, as has happened in many other temples in Tamil Nadu.

From inscriptions, and from some of its structures—the linga shrines, the pillared hall, and the gateway known as the Kili Gopura—the third enclosure can be dated to the twelfth and thirteenth centuries. Together with the buildings and deities of the first and second enclosures, it contains all the fundamental elements for the life of a temple; this means that the structures in the fourth and fifth enclosures can be considered superfluous from the ritual point of view.

On the east-west axis stands the third Nandi, an altar for offerings, and the mast on which Shiva's flag is raised during the great festivals. The north side is occupied by the shrine of the goddess, on Shiva's left as usual. This shrine was thoroughly renovated in the nineteenth century by the wealthy merchant community of Nattukkottai Chettiars. At the south-eastern corner of the courtyard, the corner of Agni, stand the kitchens where food for the deities is prepared. As usual, in the north-eastern corner stands the sacrificial pavilion used during the four great annual festivals (*brahmotsavas*). This type of structure started to become a permanent building only from the thirteenth century onwards, with an opening on each of its four sides as in the Vedic sacrificial pavilions, which were light structures to be burnt after the sacrifice was completed.

The modern shrine of Pidari, housing the tenth-century Seven Mothers who originally stood in the second enclosure, is a perfect example of how temple life has changed over the centuries. In fact, when worship of the Seven Mothers declined after the end of the Chola period, their images were often removed from Shiva temples and installed in small village temples under the name of a single deity, Pidari, who functions as the guardian of the village, facing north. In this capacity Pidari presides over orthodox brahmin temple festivals, giving protection by touring the village before the first day of the festival. The unusual feature at Tiruvannamalai is that Pidari is found within the great temple itself, and that new images of the Seven Mothers have been provided for the second enclosure at a later date.

Although construction of the fourth and fifth enclosures and their buildings extended over two hundred years, from the fourteenth to the sixteenth centuries, the asymmetrical placing of the gateways on all four sides of the fourth enclosure indicates that a fifth enclosure was planned from the outset. The Brahma Tirtha Tank, originally outside the temple precincts, as is often the case, was included in the fourth enclosure where two pillared halls were erected on the west side, as well as one on the east, the Puravi Mandapa. Here too are the fourth Nandi, and several shrines with lingas. The eastern gateway, the Vallala Gopura, contains within its passage a niche holding a statue of King Ballala which is worshipped

twice a year, in commemoration of his death and of Shiva's coronation as king.

The fifth enclosure is pierced with four gateways which are much higher than those of the inner enclosures; this composition, of a series of gateways which increases in height as one moves away from the central shrine, seen already in the eleventh century with two gateways at Thanjavur, became a rule for all temples with several enclosures. The two main elements in the fifth courtyard at Tiruvannamalai are the huge thousand-pillared hall and, opposite to it, a tank surrounded by a colonnade, the Shivaganga. Like the other courtyards, this one too has its Nandi facing the main shrine.

The other structures here are the results of spontaneous devotion on the part of worshippers, rather than the outcome of deliberate planning determined by ritual requirements. Thus, Gopurattu Ilaiyanar (Subrahmanya of the gateway) is housed in a shrine built around the statue of Subrahmanya in a niche in the eastern face of the gateway to the fourth enclosure. The same process has been at work for the Kambattu Ilaiyanar (Subrahmanya of the pillar): the image of Subrahmanya on one pillar of a small pillared hall became the object of such devotion that an imposing shrine was built to shelter the pillar-deity and the priests who officiate there. In another example, the Komutti merchant community has become devoted to an isolated statue of Ganapati in the temple gardens, and built a shrine for it in recent years.

rites

The very first ceremony in the temple, which takes place before sunrise, is the return of Ganga to the shrine. Accompanied by a torch-bearer, a flute-player, and a drummer, a priest riding an elephant fetches water in a vessel from a tank to the south of the town that is considered extremely pure, passing through the southern gateway, the Tirumanjana Gopura (Sanskrit: *majjana*, ablution or immersion). After circling the third courtyard the priest sprinkles water on the door of the gateway to the second enclosure, and pours the contents of the vessel on the threshold. The gates then open for the second ceremony, the awakening of the gods. The priest proceeds to the bedchamber where Shiva, in the form of a bronze mount Meru about thirty centimetres high, and Parvati have passed the night on a small swing. When the curtains are drawn back, the first thing that the gods should see can only be themselves, so a mirror, formerly held by a barber, is fixed opposite the sleeping-chamber. When the priest has removed the previous day's garlands from the deities, he offers them some sweetmeats before they return to their places in the antechambers of their respective shrines. Shiva-Meru leaves on an embroidered silk cushion, while Parvati is carried in the palanquin which also brings her to the bedchamber in the evening.

In the central shrine the first of the six pujas which punctuate the day from six o'clock in the morning until nine at night then begins. Apart from the "puja of protection in the evening" which is more elaborate, with, in particular, chanting of the *Yajur Veda*, all these ceremonies are similar. The first, the "dawn puja", is preceded by a ceremony in the square hall in front of the main shrine. First,



Arunachaleshvara temple, devotees resting on the steps of the thousand-pillared hall.



Arunachaleshvara temple, two western *gopuras* above the innermost enclosures.

worship is offered to the statue of Surya and then to Nandi; then, in the south-west corner, the sacrificial fire ritual takes place, ending with the consecration of two vessels of water which will be used for the final ablutions of the Shiva linga and the goddess during the dawn puja which follows. For this the priest enters the cella of the linga, and after the previous day's garlands have been removed and thrown towards the north-east, in the direction of Chandikeshvara, the linga undergoes a succession of ablutions with water and anointings with milk, oil, honey or other substances, after which it is clothed and adorned with fresh garlands. A brahmin assistant then brings the god's meal from the kitchens in a covered plate, whose lid he lifts slightly towards the god, to avoid it being seen by adverse powers. After the meal the various attributes are presented: mirror, parasol, fan, flag, emblem, and fly-whisk; then incense, lamps, and camphor are offered to the sound of bells and temple music. The entire puja is accompanied by the chants of invocation, dedication, and praise. The priest ends the ceremony by distributing sacred ash to the devotees present, and then leaves to perform the worship of the goddess in her shrine in the third enclosure.

The deities in the various enclosures receive only two simpler pujas, performed by priests of lesser rank. The morning puja consists of an ablution with water, adornment with a garland, food-offering, and the presentation of a lamp; in the evening puja there is only the lamp-offering. While the first worship in the morning is offered first to Surya and then to Nandi, during the two pujas for the enclosure deities this order is, understandably, reversed.

The three innermost enclosures are strictly controlled by the priests, to the extent that the doors of the third enclosure are kept closed when no religious activity is being performed, and a guard discreetly controls access to the third courtyard to eliminate undesirables. The fourth and fifth courtyards are more flexibly controlled: pilgrims may eat and sleep there, and interest in a particular image, especially in the gateways, may arouse popular enthusiasm and give rise to a new place of worship.

In the nineteenth century about two hundred people were permanently attached to the temple; today, with the disappearance of the *dasis*, or dancing-girls, the figure stands at about a hundred and fifty. The priests, divided into four hierarchical groups, number about twenty, not counting their family members who help them during the crowded festivals. The non-brahmin staff, some of whose services are mainly required at the festival periods, consist of musicians, singers, masters of ceremony, carpenters, potters, washermen, garland-makers, palanquin bearers, administrators, guards, and cleaners.

FESTIVALS

In its rituals and festivals, Tiruvannamalai, like every other holy place, displays a cyclic concept of time that is typical of Hinduism. In addition to the daily worship offered to the gods in their shrines or sub-shrines, there are many festivals marked by processions of one or more deities. The basic cycle of the Hindu calendar, the solar year from solstice to solstice, also observes certain moments such as the lunar

fortnights and certain astral conjunctions.

One of these moments which is particularly important in any temple, is the *brahmotsava*, the only festival at which the flag is raised, conceived as the close of a cycle (the end of a period of dissolution), and at the same time a fresh beginning, a re-creation. Over the course of the centuries the great holy sites have been enlarged and renovated, and acquired more and more numerous festivals. Thus Tiruvannamalai, in addition to its other festivals, has four *brahmotsavas* in the course of the year, each of ten days duration; the most famous of these is Karttigai, a celebration which inscriptions show to have lasted only one day in the Chola period. This Karttigai *brahmotsava*, and another festival known as “the holy quarrel”, are the only ones during which the god circumambulates the mountain.

The Tiruvudal, or holy love-quarrel, which is mimed in the temples, derives from a well-known theme of ancient Tamil literature, the *udal*, the pretended quarrel between lovers supposed to enliven married life. This is normally a festival of Nataraja, culminating with the appearance of the constellation Ardra in December; but at Tiruvannamalai it is unusually celebrated at the end of the January *brahmotsava*, over two days. On the first morning three deities, Shiva in the form of Somaskanda, the goddess Parvati, and Sundarar, one of the sixty-three Shaivite saints who is well known for quarrelling with his two wives, are taken three times around the car-streets in procession. At Shiva’s feet sit two priests, one with a turban representing Brahma, the other with a cylindrical tiara representing Vishnu, an image of the Trimurti (Hindu trinity of Brahma, Vishnu, and Shiva) which refers to the myth of the locality, according to which Shiva demonstrates his supremacy over Brahma and Vishnu. In the course of the procession hundreds of saris and dhotis offered by devotees are put around the necks of the deities.

In the afternoon the quarrel takes place in the south car-street, called Tiruvudal Teru. The god and goddess face each other at opposite ends of the street, and one of the temple singers, representing Sundarar, passes back and forth between them, singing the reproaches of the goddess and the god’s unvarying excuse: the salvation of his devotees. The complaints of the goddess reflect the tension between life in the world and life outside it. She accuses Shiva of unfaithfulness: he has taken Ganga as a second wife, he seduces the wives of the sages, he visits dancing-girls. She also complains of his ascetic excesses: he dances in cremation grounds at night, he neglects her for his devotee Bhiringi. When, after an apparent reconciliation, Parvati sees that the god does not follow her back into the temple as he had promised, she returns alone and orders the doors to be closed. Then Shiva begins a nocturnal circumambulation of the mountain; this is a circumambulation of himself, and therefore there is no worship in the temple during his absence.

On the other side of the mountain, a wild, deserted place associated with the myth of the world of asceticism, he grants liberation to Bhiringi, the three-legged devotee occasionally represented on Chola images of Nataraja. There too, are stolen the jewels which he will then recover in an eastern village after circling the mountain. When he returns to the temple at the end of the morning Shiva dances, and the goddess, won over, declares herself ready for reconciliation, but requests the boon of occupying the left side of Shiva — which is fulfilled at the *brahmotsava*



Arunachaleswara temple, principal shrine in innermost enclosure.



Arunachaleswara temple, Ganesha sub-shrine.



Arunachaleshvara temple, devotee prostrating at the entrance of the main shrine.

of Karttigai.

For each *brahmotsava*, the essential moment, the sacred bath on the last day, coincides with a particular relation of some constellation with the full moon. The commemoration of Shiva's appearance as the column of fire, a one-day festival in all temples that has become a ten-day *brahmotsava* at Tiruvannamalai, falls at the time of the conjunction of the constellation Krittika and the full moon; the sacred bath, or *tirthavari*, therefore, as an exception to the rule, takes place the day after.

Several rites precede a *brahmotsava*. First, the *pandalkalmuhurtam*, or "the erection of the first pole of the *pandal* (a light pavilion) at an auspicious moment", which takes place several weeks before the *brahmotsava* because of the important preparations this requires, which can begin only after the pole has been erected. The pole is set up outside the temple, on the auspicious north-eastern corner, and recalls the solemn erection of the first post in the construction of the Vedic sacrificial pavilion. Shortly afterwards the great chariots (*ratha* or *ter*) are worshipped, after they have been inspected and, if necessary, repaired by the temple carpenters. Then there are various ceremonies of propitiation to protect the area. Usually the goddess Kali, as protectress of the place, is taken around the village before every *brahmotsava*. At Tiruvannamalai this rite has been elaborated: Durga, another form of Shakti, from the bazaar street is brought out three days before the *brahmotsava*, then Pidari from the third courtyard of the temple two days before, and Ganapati on the day before.

The real beginning of the festival, marked by the flag being raised on the staff in front of the main shrine, is preceded by worship of the flag in the sacrificial hall; this ritual is in fact called "worship of the bull" (*rishabha yaga*), because a bull representing Shiva appears on the flag, drawn on the cloth by a craftsman. The entire flag-raising ceremony, in which the long white cloth (Shiva), is entwined with a red cloth (the goddess), is accompanied by chanting, inviting all the gods to the festival. When, at the end of the *brahmotsava* the flag is lowered as farewells are chanted to the gods, the sprouts from seeds which have been set to germinate in the sacrificial hall during the last ten days are planted all around the flagstaff, a rite which recalls the symbolic fertility of the Vedic sacrificial post, of which it is said that abundant fruits arise from it.

Between the raising and the lowering of the flag, the temple is the scene of two types of activity during the day: each morning and evening the five deities, Shiva, the goddess, Subrahmanya, Ganapati, and Chandikeshvara, go around the car-streets in procession; before leaving, they present themselves in front of the sacrificial hall where the fire-ritual is performed twice a day, and receive on their foreheads a protective black spot made of ash mixed with ghee. On the seventh day the same deities, each on a huge wooden car, are led in turn around the four temple streets in a procession which lasts the whole day.

In the night of the ninth day the fire festival (Mahadipa) properly begins, as the moon passes from the constellation Bharani to that of Krittika. At the same time as a nocturnal puja to the linga, a fire sacrifice is performed before the statue of Surya in the hall in front of the main shrine; at dawn a small bowl of ghee lighted at this fire is used to light five other lamps representing the five aspects of Shiva. During the mid-morning, some fishermen solemnly carry a portion of this fire

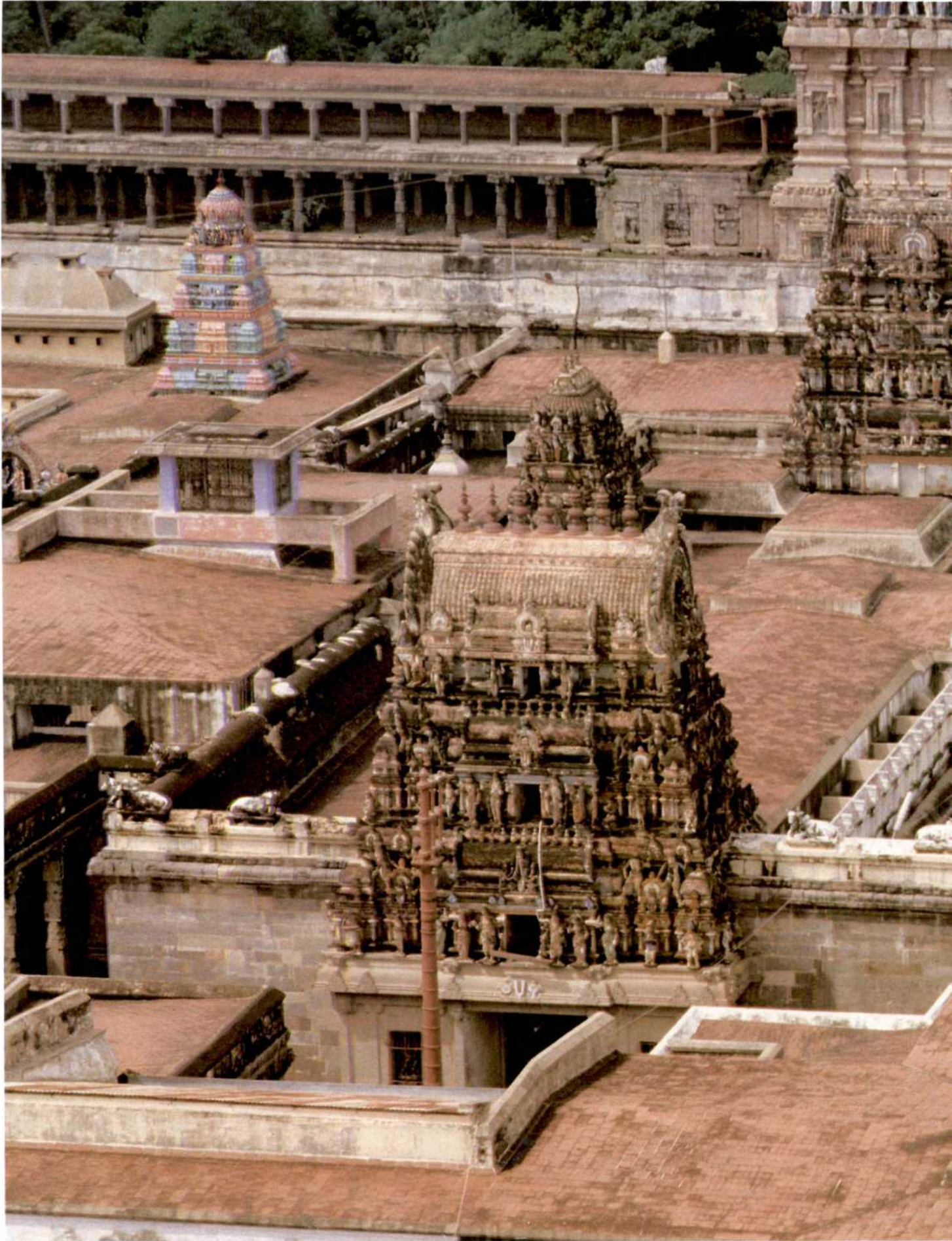
inside a container of baked earth to the summit of the mountain, where a large copper brazier filled with ghee and pieces of cloth has been placed. As night falls, the five gods sit in their palanquins in the third courtyard amid a crowd of pilgrims who gradually fall silent in the intensity of their fervour; suddenly a light springs up on the mountain and Ardhanari appears dancing amidst the crowd. The fire burns all night, and even on subsequent nights if the ghee offerings of the pilgrims have been abundant.

After the crowd of pilgrims has paid homage to the five deities, the doors of the main shrine are closed and all worship ceases while Shiva, accompanied by his Shakti, the goddess, leaves to circumambulate the mountain—a journey which is both around himself, and around the manifested world, symbolized by the shrines to the cardinal points.

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CHIDAMBARAM



Nataraja temple, roof tops revealing hut-like forms of the central shrine.

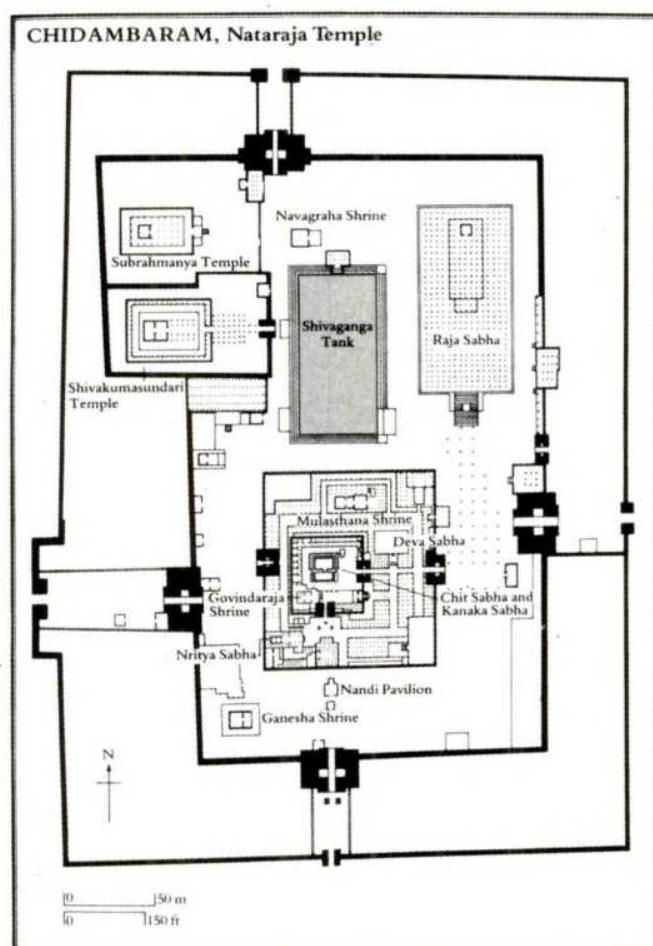


IN South India the dance of Shiva has been of great importance since Pallava times, and Chidambaram has always been the centre for the worship of Nataraja (King of Dancers). Shiva's temple, the Nataraja or Sabhanayaka (Lord of the Sabha) temple, in Tamil Nadu is known to Shaivas simply as *koyil*, the temple. Its site has also other names: Tillai (since there was first a forest of *tillai*, *Excoecaria agallocha*, trees); Puliur (the place of the tiger-footed, Vyaghrapada), Chirrambalam (the little hall). According to myth, Shiva danced here to celebrate his victory over ritualist ascetics. Then in the present *kal* (world age) Vyaghrapada, and Patanjali, the incarnation of Vishnu's snake, worshipped lingas here, and Shiva favoured them by continuing to dance in the Chit Sabha (Chirrambalam, Chidambaram). A separate myth, perhaps originating in Tiruvalangadu, names Kali as the original inhabitant of the Tillai Forest; Shiva defeated her in a dance competition by kicking up his right leg, a pose she could not equal. He banished her to the northern boundary of the town. (Worship at her temple there is considered the proper conclusion of a pilgrimage to the Shiva temple.)

The three Tamil saints whose hymns comprise the *Tevaram*, Appar, Sambandar (seventh century), and Sundarar (eighth century), went into raptures on beholding the Dance of Shiva in this temple. Manikkavachakar (ninth century), the greatest of Tamil poets, devoted most of his poetry to Shiva in Chidambaram, where he attained salvation. There is a shrine to all four facing east to the south of the Vahana Mandapa where their respective days of *mukti* (salvation) are celebrated. Each of the *gopuras* (towered gateways) contains in the doorway modern plaster sculptures of the four poets, with the poet who is said to have entered by that particular gateway separated from the other three—Sambandar by the south, Appar by the west, Sundarar by the north, and Manikkavachakar by the east. Hymns from the *Tevaram* are sung by a layman during the *sayan kalam*, second prayers of the evening, and at other times. Following the practice in other temples, stone plaques of hymns from the *Tevaram* have been set up in various places during the last twenty years, notably around the north facing walls of the inner *prakara* (corridor); and the complete text of Manikkavachakar's *Tiruvachakam* is set out on the walls of the portico surrounding the temple tank.

HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

It was in Chidambaram, in a sealed room on the western side of the inner *prakara* that the Chola king Rajaraja I is said to have recovered the hymns of the *Tevaram*, and the singing of them thereafter became an established feature of Shaiva worship. In the reign of Kulottunga II, in the thousand-pillared hall, Sekkhilar composed and expounded his *Periya Puranam*, the final work of the Shaiva Tamil canon. As in all major Shiva temples in Tamil Nadu, the sixty-three Nayanmars (Shaiva saints) commemorated in the *Periya Puranam* have their images set out in one long row, against the north wall of the second *prakara*.



Nataraja temple, Shivaganga Tank and north *gopura* beyond.

In Pallava times, texts refer to Shiva as eight-armed; and it is only under the Cholas that the canonical form of Nataraja dancing the Ananda Tandava (Dance of Bliss) was codified. The earliest parts of the temple date from Chola times (ninth to thirteenth centuries). The Chola kings adopted Nataraja as their family deity (*kulanayaka*), and several had themselves crowned in Chidambaram. They gilded the roof of the sanctum, added enclosure walls, pavilions, a sanctum for the goddess, and built the *gopuras*. Their work was continued by the Pandyas (thirteenth to fourteenth centuries). The region then suffered under the Delhi armies, but the Vijayanagara emperor, Krishnadeva Raya (ruled 1509-1529) completed or restored the north *gopura*.

The temple's *sthalapurana* (local legend), the *Chidambaramabatmya*, tells of a legendary king, Hiranyavarman, from the north who rebuilt the temple out of gratitude for being cured of leprosy in the Shivaganga Tank. It has been plausibly suggested that this figure was based on the historical Chola king, Kulottunga I (ruled 1070-1118). Hiranyavarman is said to have brought back from the north the three thousand Dikshitaras, original priests of the temple who had earlier gone to the north. On their return there were only two thousand nine hundred and ninety-nine, but Shiva himself completed their number, thus supporting each of their claims to be Shiva.

It was also in Chola times that the symbolism of the temple was elaborated. The Ananda Tandava is seen to symbolize the *pancha krityas*, five divine acts—creation, sustenance, dissolution, concealment, and bestowal of grace rather than merely destruction. With regard to linga worship, the standard form of Shiva worship, it came to be held that each of the five elements constitutes a linga in South India: earth in the Ekambareshvara temple in Kanchipuram, water in the Jambukeshvara temple outside Tiruchirapalli, fire at the Tiruvannamalai temple, wind at Kalahasti, and space (*akasha*) at Chidambaram. This formless linga is supposed to be in the Chit Sabha beside the image of Nataraja; and this infinite form is clearly the most significant of the five, considered the heart of the world. This formlessness in a small space is held to be the Daharavidya of the great Upanishads.

It was entirely appropriate that in the supreme monument of Chola art, Rajaraja I's great temple at Thanjavur, a Chola painting in the circumambulatory path of the *garbhagriha* (sanctum sanctorum) shows the king worshipping Nataraja in the Chit Sabha at Chidambaram.

URBAN LAYOUT

Chidambaram is two hundred and thirty-five kilometres south of Madras, on the Madras-Thanjavur National Highway; Thanjavur, formerly the centre of Chola power, lies one hundred and seven kilometres away. In 1971 Chidambaram extended over an area of nearly five square kilometres, with a population of less than fifty thousand. In Chola times Chidambaram was a municipal district (*taniyur*) and its boundaries were extensive. They are defined, for instance, in Umapati Shivacharya's poem in praise of Dancing Shiva's lifted foot, the



Nataraja temple, north *gopura* completed by Krishnadeva Raya.

Kunchitanghristava (circa 1300) and in a deed of sale of a house in 1804, as the Vellar River to the north, the Kollidam River to the south, the Viranam Tank to the west, and the sea to the east.

The region was originally a forest of Tillai trees, hence the name Tillai, and the town clearly developed around the temple, beginning with the four car streets eighteen metres in width abutting the temple. The Dikshitaras continue to live just outside the temple in these streets. Further to the east and also in the rich new suburb of Kanakaisabhar Nagar to the south live mainly Vellalars. To the immediate west of West Car Street live the Chettiars (merchants) and this is the main area of business activity. The earliest development of the town seems to have been on the western side, for in addition to the early Anantishvara temple there are the principal minor temples: the Ilamayakkinar temple, where Vyaghrapada worshipped the linga, the Gayatri Amman temple, and the Kodandarama temple. The *matha* (monastery) of Aghorashivacharya (whose ritual manual, written in 1157, has been followed by most Shiva temples in Tamil Nadu other than the Sabhanayaka) was beside the Anantishvara temple. Again, the western *gopura* has a late Chola Ganesha (first son of Shiva and Parvati) shrine attached on its outer south side (where Umapati Shivacharya worshipped around 1300), and a late Chola Subrahmanya (second son of Shiva and Parvati) shrine on its inner north side, these accretions demonstrate the early popularity of entrance from the west.

The town continues to be a pilgrim centre, though attendance at festivals is said to have declined in recent decades. It once boasted no less than fifty-five *mathas*, or monastic establishments, but few of them are now active. New life has been infused by the Annamalai University, founded in 1929, situated to the east of the town.

Chidambaram is said to have ten *tirthas*, holy bathing places. One of these is the sea, and two (the Shivaganga Tank and the Paramananda Kupa, Well of Supreme Bliss), are within the temple. Of the others, the most famous is the Tirupparkkadal Tank, the Tank of Divine Milk, to the north, west of the Tillai Kali temple; this was filled with milk by Shiva to feed Vyaghrapada's son Upamanyu. Adjoining is a *matha* on the site where Manikkavachakar is said to have written his poems. Also noteworthy is the tank of the Ilamaiyakkinar temple, where the potter Nilakantha and his estranged wife, both Shiva *bhaktas* (devotees), bathed in their old age, each holding the end of a stick to avoid touching; blessed by Shiva, both regained their youth. Another *tirtha* is the Chamundi Tank of the Tillai Kali temple, which is said to have been excavated by the goddess herself in expiation of engaging Shiva in the dance competition.

ARCHITECTURE AND ART

The Sabhanayaka temple has as its sanctum the Chit Sabha principally containing a bronze image of Nataraja. This shrine faces south. Immediately in front of it and serving as a *mandapa* (hall) is the Kanaka Sabha. Facing east and at right angles to the Chit Sabha is the Vishnu shrine. These are the

principal structures of the innermost enclosure, or *prakara*. In the second *prakara* on the axis of the Chit Sabha is the Nritta Sabha (dance hall). North of the Chit Sabha in the second *prakara* is the Mulasthanā (where the deity is consecrated). The original linga shrine faces east as normal; this linga is said to have been worshipped by Vyaghrapada and Patanjali prior to Shiva dancing in the Chit Sabha. To the east is the Deva Sabha (hall of the gods). In the third enclosure are found the Shivaganga Tank, the Shivakamasundari (Parvati) shrine, the hundred-pillared hall, the thousand-pillared hall, the Pandya Nayaka Subrahmanya shrine, and a Vinayaka (Ganesha) temple. These are the principal structures of the temple, other than the *gopuras*. In the fourth enclosure, beyond the *gopuras*, are coconut groves and flower gardens.

The four *gopuras* are each forty-two metres high, with bases of granite, and the superstructures of brick and mortar. Of the four, only the southern *gopura* has an exact and obvious alignment, being directly in line with Nataraja in the Chit Sabha—not with the centre of the Chit Sabha, but with Nataraja, who is about one metre to the east of the centre. The priority of the southern *gopura* is signalled by the two saffron flags flying from it; these are changed twice a year at the two main festivals. This southern alignment is a feature also of the hundred-pillared hall, the thousand-pillared hall, and the Deva Sabha; and yet the southern *gopura*, and the large Nandi (Shiva's bull) and two *bali pithas* (sacrificial pits) onto which it opens are confronted with the closed wall of the second enclosure! Such puzzling anomalies are a result of the great age of the site and its varied development.

The west and east *gopuras* were completed around 1250. The south *gopura* was entirely built at some time between 1248 and 1272, though some decorative detail and bas-relief figures have been left unfinished. The north *gopura* was probably begun around the same time as the south—Umapati Shivacharya around 1300 mentions the temple's four *gopuras*—but was completed (or repaired) in the first half of the sixteenth century by Krishnadeva Raya, whose effigy it contains.

The first tier of all the *gopuras* is crowded with divinities other than Shiva, the second tier rises up grandly and spaciouly, and is devoted to forms of Shiva. It is noteworthy that the dominant niche on each side of the long façades contains one of four images, Somaskanda, Kalyanasundara, Bhikshatana, or Kankala. The four images form two pairs. Bhikshatana, the mendicant, differs very little from Kankala; the former is naked, the latter is clothed. Kalyanasundara represents the marriage of Shiva and Parvati; Somaskanda shows the married couple seated side by side, with their son Skanda at their feet. The contrast between the pairs is stark: the lonely wandering ascetic as opposed to the married man and his family. In the case of the east and west *gopuras*, both inner and outer tiers have one married and one ascetic image. In the south and north, both tiers do not have the opposition: two ascetics, or two married forms. In both south and north the ascetic forms face south, and the married forms face north. The immediate origin of the Dance of Bliss, the Ananda Tandava, is Shiva's victory as Bhikshatana over the married ascetics in the Daruka Forest; within the temple he enjoys domestic bliss with Parvati. The

Ananda Tandava pose is not found on the *gopuras* since it is reserved for the Chit Sabha alone.

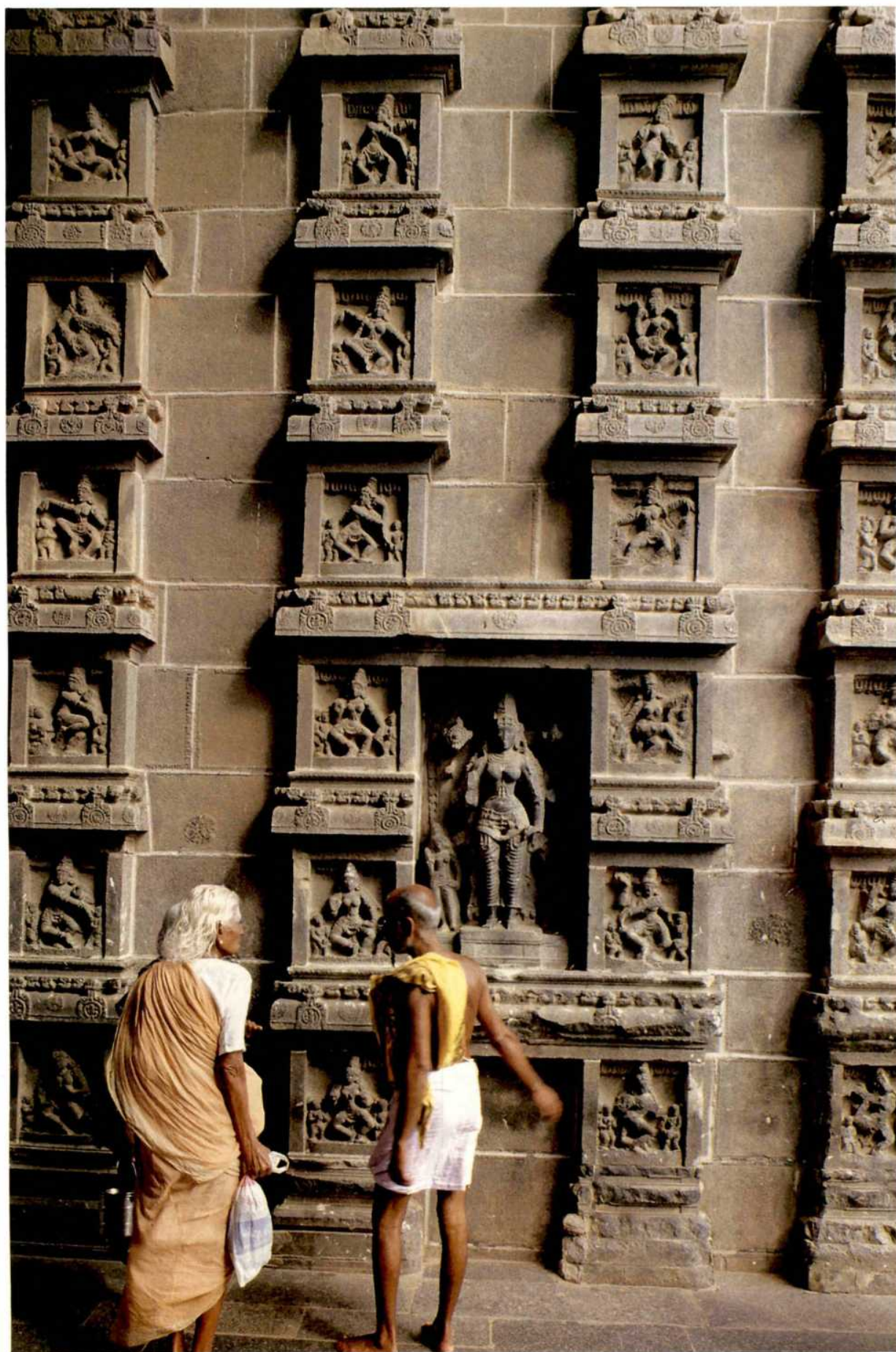
Dance poses from the *Natya Shastra* are illustrated in the doorways of each of the *gopuras*, with labels in Grantha script in the east and west *gopuras*. Dancing girls and musicians form friezes on the bottom of the plinth of the thousand-pillared hall, and on the *prakara* of the Shvakamasundari shrine; also around the base of the Nritta Sabha. Live dance performances have recently returned to the temple in the form of a festival held every January.

Much of the temple is difficult to date, but the oldest surviving structure in the inner two *prakaras* seems to be the Nritta Sabha, which faces north, in axial line with the Chit Sabha. On the eastern and western sides were two stone wheels fronted by galloping horses; in the 1955 Kumbhabhisheka (consecration ceremony), they were concreted over except for the top of the head of the eastern horse and the top of the western wheel.

The Sabha contains a shrine to Urdhvatandava Shiva, and it has been suggested that this is the Edirambalam, or shrine opposite the Chit Sabha, which in an inscription is ascribed to the time of Kulottunga I; but it is more likely that the present structure was built in the reign of Kulottunga III (ruled 1178-1216). Here Shiva defeated Kali in the dance competition by raising his leg. A small image of dancing Kali is on the floor beside the Urdhvatandava *murti* (image). However, the walls of this shrine are clearly an addition to the original structure, the fine pillars being partly concealed within plain stonework. The shrine has its own wood-framed copper-plated roof, as does an open area before it of some forty-nine square metres, the rest of the structure having a flat roof. It should also be noted that the south-west corner of the shrine has a north facing Sharadheshvara shrine, seemingly an addition to the original structure.

Descriptions of the Nritta Sabha state that there are fifty-six pillars; however, only some forty-six are visible. The eastern side of the base of the Sabha is cut sheer away, and the only steps are cut into the side. On the north-west corner are two *mandapikas*, one facing north with a Bhikshatana image, the other, smaller, facing west housing a Vrishabhantika image, standing Shiva and Parvati with Shiva leaning on his bull. The rest of the western side is abutted by the *yagashala* (place where Vedic sacrifices are held) of the Vishnu temple. The Nritta Sabha has clearly suffered a diminution of its original beauty; above all, perhaps there is a lack of an original stairway.

The Nritta Sabha is similar to the *ratha mandapas*, or stone chariot pavilions, of Tribhuvanam, Palaiyarai, and elsewhere. The most notable example is in the Surya temple at Konarak, which would seem chronologically to be due to southern influence, but a chariot is entirely appropriate to the logic of the iconography of Surya, whilst there is no connection in the southern shrines with the Tripurari form of Shiva which is the only form of whose iconography may include a chariot. The generally held view is that in Tamil Nadu such stone chariots represent wooden temple carts; a stone version of *ratha* (chariot) is particularly appropriate in Chidambaram where a mobile image is the chief *murti*. Another parallel with Orissa is that it is common there to have a dance



Nataraja temple, passageway of the east *gopura* depicting dance poses according to the *Natya Shastra*.

pavilion on the same axis as the sanctum. A parallel has also been drawn with the painting at Tiuppudaimarudar (near Tirunelveli) of a dancing girl in a similarly situated dance pavilion. The open area in the Nritta Sabha mentioned above, of seven by seven metres, is in accordance with the normal space now considered necessary for Bharatanatyam.

At the centre of the temple are the twin Chit and Kanaka Sabhas. These adjoining edifices, of almost identical rectangular plan, share a plinth with the usual Chola-style mouldings; the Chit Sabha is raised a further one metre. A hall one and a half metres wide links the Sabhas, flanked by steps set against the plinth to the east and west. Within the hall five silver-plated steps lead from the Kanaka Sabha to the higher level of the Chit Sabha, though the first silver step is on the same level as the Kanaka Sabha. The decoration of the vertical panels of these steps include forward-facing squatting lions of the Vijayanagara period, which are also found on the doors of the Kanaka Sabha. The five steps are held to represent the five syllables of the Shiva mantra, *namah shivaya*. The steps were plated in silver in the eighteenth century by Manali Mudaliar.

Within the Chit Sabha is a further stone plinth set about one metre; beneath Nataraja and Shivakamasundari, to his left, this plinth is fronted with gilt panelling, the two *murtis* rising above. On the floor before Nataraja holding votive lamps stand silver images of Muthiah Chettiar and Meenatchee Achee, benefactors of the temple and parents of the founder of the Annamalai University. To Nataraja's right is the Chidambaram Rahasya (secret), where several strings of golden *bilva* leaves hang in front of a curtain. Behind the curtain is now said to be empty space, the *akasha* linga, the linga of space. The curtain is one and a half metres high and three and a half metres long, extending behind Nataraja as well as covering the Chidambaram Rahasya. It is made of two layers, the inner one red, the outer one black: enlightenment inside, illusion outside. It is renewed twice a year, on the tenth day of the main festivals, the discarded curtains being preserved in the Deva Sabha.

In addition to Nataraja, Shivakamasundari, and the curtain of the Chidambaram Rahasya, the Chit Sabha contains a *mukhalinga*, representing the head of Brahma that Shiva cut off; Shiva's *padukas*, golden sandals set in a plinth and mounted on a *pitha* (seat); Balinayaka, a form of Chandrashekhara, taken round the second *prakara* during food offerings to the various deities; Svarnakarshana Bhairava, occasionally worshipped in the Kanaka Sabha, and said formerly to have turned copper into gold for the Dikshitar; and, worshipped daily in the Kanaka Sabha, the ruby Nataraja and the crystal linga known as Chandramaulishvara said to be formed by Shiva for the Dikshitar from the light of the crescent moon on his head.

The Chit Sabha has wooden walls, made up of sections of four planks, each thirty-five centimetres wide, set between wooden pillars of the same width; the southern wall has window grills and wooden doors, and is covered in silver plates. The roof is said to be supported by twenty-eight free-standing wooden pillars; and the roof of the Kanaka Sabha by eighteen wooden pillars. Copper-plated wooden doors are fixed between the pillars. The two roofs of wood are both rectangular with curvilinear roofs resembling the roof of the



Nataraja temple, distant view of the west *gopura*.



Nataraja temple, pillared entrance to the Shvakamasundari shrine.



Nataraja temple, Shivakamasundari shrine, painted ceiling panel, depicting the story of Bhikshatana.

Draupadi Ratha at Mamallapuram. (The same shaped roof is found on all the Sabhas, and also over the sanctums of the other shrines.) The Chit Sabha has copper tiles plated in gold, the Kanaka Sabha, despite its name, has copper tiles. The exterior of the Chit Sabha has a double colonnade of round columns of highly polished black stone; this colonnade is narrower on the eastern side, to allow passage round the Chandikeshvara (one who keeps accounts) shrine, though this too is not old. The ceiling of this colonnade has paintings retelling the *sthalapurana* dating back perhaps to the beginning of the century. The plinths of both Sabhas have been recently faced with white tiles interspersed with narrower columns of green tiles.

Adjoining the eastern side of the Kanaka Sabha is a recent *mandapa* which consists of a copper roof of a similar design supported by round wooden pillars similar to those around the outside of the Chit Sabha. Under this roof worshippers gather to watch the lamp worship of the Ratnasabhapati, the ruby Nataraja. In the north-west corner of the inner *prakara* is Shiva's bedroom (*palliarai*), which was recently faced with black marble. Here the god, represented by his sandals (*padukas*), spends the night with the goddess.

The present Vishnu shrine, known as Govindaraja, is not old. The rectangular *garbhagriha* has a barrel-vaulted roof, and has an *ardhamandapa* (outer hall) and a *pradakshina patha* (circumambulatory path). A few Vaikhanasa priests are in charge of this shrine. In the past there have been disputes with the Dikshitars, and the ownership of the hundred-pillared hall in the third *prakara* remains in dispute. The Mulasthan, site of the original linga of the temple worshipped by Vyaghrapada prior to Shiva's performance of the Ananda Tandava, is perhaps Chola; the *pranala* (spout) of the *garbhagriha* is on a lower level, suggesting the existence of the shrine earlier than the construction of the plinth. The Deva Sabha lies between the eastern gateways of the second and first *prakaras*. It is a spacious rectangular hall nineteen and a half metres high, walled on all sides; its base is now buried among the surrounding platforms. Here more than one hundred bronzes are housed, and pujas to the festival images performed before they are taken out. Kulottunga II is said to have gilded the Deva Sabha. Placed against the north-west exterior is Alagar, the custodian of the keys of the temple. The Dikshitars congregate in front of this hall, and hold their meetings within.

The largest building of the temple is the Raja Sabha, the thousand-pillared hall, fifty-nine metres wide, hundred and one metres long. Huge pillars nearly five metres high stand on a massive plinth four and a half metres high. The rear half has a further plinth approximately one metre high. In each half the central space has two rows of pillars omitted, and is roofed with a brick vault formed of radiating arches, in imitation of the wooden roofs of the other Sabhas. Between the two halves and at the far rear, are further open spaces with similar vaults, oriented at right angles to the main areas. Openings at the base of the vaults allow light to enter. The effect is quite different from any other structure of the temple, and the sense of space is reminiscent of a mosque or church. The principal use of this Sabha is for the *abbisheka* (anointing ceremony) of Nataraja and Shivakamasundari as the culminating session of the two great

festivals, the *mahotsavas*.

RITUAL PRACTICES AND FESTIVALS

The main ritual begins in the morning with a palanquin collecting Shiva in the form of his *padukas* from the bedroom to the accompaniment of reed horns and drums. The *padukas* are taken to the Chit Sabha. After they are removed from the palanquin several worshippers eagerly touch and revere the cushion on which the *padukas* had been placed. The doors of the Kanaka Sabha are closed while the deity is offered a breakfast of milk. An hour-and-a-half later the Homa or Fire Sacrifice begins. Twelve silver pots filled with water, *kusha* grass, and *bilva* leaves are placed on top and Vedic mantras are chanted into the water so that the pots are believed to hold the power of the mantras. The mantra is recited by an Aiyar brahman, a member of one of the three families currently authorized by the Dikshitar to act for them. The Dikshitar in charge for the day puts *kusha* grass, wood, and ghee onto the fire. When this is completed he bathes the Chandramaulishvara, the crystal linga. The *abbisheka* over, it is returned to the Chit Sabha, and the doors are closed while the deity is fed. Food is offered on the large *bali pitha* behind the *dvajastambha* (flag-pole), and then the Balinayaka image of Shiva, which stands at the eastern side of the Nataraja, is carried on the palanquin round the second *prakara* and food offered at the shrines there. The morning worship concludes about half-past nine with the waving of lamps. The priest stands in the Kanaka Sabha with a multiple lamp, and then in the Chit Sabha with various smaller lamps in turn. This first session of worship finally closes with the priest going to the Rahasya, the wall to the west of Nataraja screened by a curtain, and opening the curtain three times while chanting the *Panchakshara*.

About a quarter to eleven in the morning the second session takes place, with the second *abbisheka* of the crystal linga; this is followed by the bathing of Ratnasabhapati, the ruby Nataraja about fifteen centimetres high. The camphor lamp is moved five times behind the ruby, to shine through it. The third session, at half-past twelve in the afternoon, comprises the *abbisheka* of the crystal linga and the waving of lamps. Thereafter the temple doors are locked, to be reopened for the fourth session at five o'clock in the evening, which attracts the largest number of worshippers. Large bells are rung during the waving of the lamps, after the bathing of the crystal linga. The fifth session, around seven o'clock in the evening, after the crystal linga *abbisheka*, interrupts the waving of lamps for ten minutes with one or two laymen singing hymns from the *Tevaram*. No men of the Otuvar or singing caste are currently available for this. In the final session, around half-past nine at night, supper is served to the deity and after the waving of lamps the *padukas* are removed to the bedroom.

Only portions of Shiva are said to be present at other shrines in India; at Chidambaram he is fully present; and it is widely held among worshippers that with other temples closing earlier than Chidambaram, all the gods then come here to worship.



Nataraja temple, Shivakamasundari shrine, recent paintings illustrating Kamasundari's story.



Nataraja temple, worshippers revering image on the *gopura*.

It must be remembered that the Dikshitaras are supposed to have come from the north. The rituals follow not the Shaiva *Agamas* of the southern temples but the unique ritual manual credited to the sage Patanjali, with mantras from the correct *Vedas*. An important feature of the worship is the respect paid to the Shri Chakra (the *yantra* or diagram of nine interlaced triangles), and the Chidambaram version of it which has Nataraja and Shivakamasundari visualized within it. The fourteenth-century poem, *Kunchitangbristava*, as well as the perhaps earlier ritual texts make it plain that the Shri Chakra was in the Chit Sabha on the right side of Nataraja, where the Chidambaram Rahasya curtain now hangs. Its connection with Nataraja is clearly shown in the modern painting on the ceiling before the Kanaka Sabha, where the Shri Chakra is shown above Nataraja. The Shri Chakra is also associated with the Shivakamasundari shrine, where a modern painting shows Shuka revealing it to Adishankara, and where a south facing Shri Chakra was recently installed in the north *prakara* wall.

Many festivals are celebrated in the temple. The two grand festivals for Nataraja take place in Margali (December-January) and Ani (June-July). Up to the eighth day of these festivals, the festival *murtis* of Somaskanda, Shivananda Nayaki, Vinayaka, Subrahmanya, and Chandeshvara are taken round the four car streets, then the Nataraja, and Shivakamasundari from the Chit Sabha are taken round before receiving *abbisheka* in the thousand-pillared hall. Carried there by temple servants, devotees carry them back to the Chit Sabha, and a feature of this return is that first Shiva then Parvati leads the way, the alternation being repeated twice more; this sequence is called *darshana* of the Ananda Tandava.

The portrayal of the *sthalapurana* on the north side of the *mandapa* of the Shivakamasundari shrine (Nayaka period) concludes with paintings of the temple festival as performed in the seventeenth century. The temple cars then were lower and the wheels smaller than are found in extant *rathas*, but the superstructures were very similar. One of the paintings shows Somaskanda mounted on the elephant as on the sixth evening of the festival today, preceded by a fantastic fireworks display; another probably shows the fifth evening, when Somaskanda, Parvati, and Subrahmanya are mounted within a huge car representing Mount Kailasa.

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LINE DRAWING

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NOTE

Conservation of Angkor Vat: An In Depth Study

B. N. Tandon

The great temple complex known as Angkor Vat in Cambodia, which was originally dedicated to the Hindu god Vishnu, was raised in the twelfth century by King Suryavarman II. It marks the culmination of the structural art of the Khmers.

The temple is also famous for its sculptural treasures depicting episodes from Indian epics and mythology besides Khmer expeditions. A quadrangle on plan, the temple rises in three terraced stages with a cluster of five towered sanctuaries in the centre. In addition to the main shrine, central gates, and galleries, there are six grand structures known as the libraries. The whole complex is surrounded with a moat, and a causeway on the west provides access to the complex. Angkor Vat is built of fine and coarse-grained sandstone with laterite at the core used up to the plinth level.

The design of Angkor Vat, although largely Khmer in artistic manipulation, seems to be a highly developed form of terraced temples, the prototypes of which would be located in simpler terraced shrines such as those at Ahicchatra, and Sarnath in India, as well as Paharpur in Bangladesh, which are dated to the fifth-sixth centuries.

Angkor Vat was unknown to the outside world till it was visited by a French missionary in 1850, and thereafter studied and the findings published by a number of scholars. The French experts contributed much to the conservation and preservation of this monument from time to time till about 1970.

INDIA'S EFFORTS

In 1980, a team of Indian archaeological experts was sent to assess the status of the temple in respect of its structural and chemical needs for conservation.

Then, in 1982 a team of Indian archaeological experts was deputed to prepare a project feasibility report as well as carry out some experimental work in the temple complex.

In 1986 yet another team, of the Archaeological Survey of India, visited Angkor Vat to furnish a reappraisal of the project report and revise the previous estimate in the light of cost escalations. This report envisaged the work

to be completed in six phases.

As a result of a bilateral cultural agreement between India and Cambodia signed in 1986, the preservation and conservation of the Angkor Vat temple was entrusted to the Archaeological Survey of India which had deputed seven teams so far (the seventh is still working).

PROBLEMS AND CONDITION OF THE MONUMENT

The temple complex sprawls on a rectangular piece of land with an area of 1.6 square kilometres enclosed with a moat. In accordance with the prevalent international practice and norms, a systematic study to identify the causes of deterioration of materials as well as to know the micro and macro climatic conditions of the structure is necessary before any conservation is initiated. A systematic analysis of weathered, semi-weathered, and non-weathered samples of sandstone was accordingly undertaken, identifying the chemical composition of rock ingredients, while simultaneously determining the physical characteristics such as porosity, permeability, and density. The colour texture varied from light ash to buff to pink. Laterites have also been used up to plinth levels and the outer veneers of sandstone of the fine-grained variety.

The factors responsible for deterioration were thus isolated:

- 1) The loss of the soluble part by leaching of alkalis and soluble silica of the feldspar which is the main component of these sandstones.
- 2) The growth over these areas of the microbiological types which secrete organic acids resulting in further damage.
- 3) The leakage present at many places resulting in dissolution of soluble ingredients in the stones.
- 4) Subsidence of the foundation.
- 5) The growth of vegetation, leading to mechanical-chemical action.
- 6) The damage caused as a result of the excreta of bats and birds.

All these factors act alone or in a cumulative fashion to bring about the phenomenon of hydrolysis, leaching out of the ingredients, kaolinization, carbonation, and oxidation, resulting in the dissolution of the silica, thus producing more voids and pores. This ultimately leads to the weakening of the stone matrix. Thus, both physical and chemical deterioration occur.



1. General view of Angkor Wat.

APPROACH IN PRESENT CONSERVATION

The main idea behind conservation plans is to prolong the life of this monument with the least intervention. This includes prevention of deterioration, preservation of the existing state, consolidation of the fabric and restoration according to the original.

The conservation undertaken till now includes the following:

STRUCTURAL REPAIRS

Phases I and II (1986-1987 and 1987-1988)

These include work such as dismantling and resetting of the vaulted roof, brackets, and pillars, grouting of cracks, resetting of the dislodged plinth and walls, providing necessary drainage, and so forth. Stone masonry steps leading to the moat on the left of the main causeway of the temple (northern embankment) have been removed and reset. Further repairs to the western gateway of the temple have also been attended to by way of grouting, pointing and water-tightening of roots and towers.

The libraries on the north and south situated between the third and fourth enclosures were also taken up for conservation work. With a view to conserving the libraries, the plinth of the porches was dismantled and reset.

New stones were provided at missing places. The stones of the sunken floors of the porches were reset and the top dressed up. The roofs and walls were restored by putting the stones in their original positions including pointing and so forth. In the northern library, pillars in the porches which had gone out of plumb were removed and reset in their correct positions.

The impressive esplanade which is a broad platform and cruciform in plan is guarded by

lions, lined with a Naga balustrade and supported by round fluted pillars from the ground level. This esplanade was perhaps used for music and dance performances in the past. Due to the widening of joints, stones were dislodged, floors had sunk, and pillars gone out of plumb. This caused the seepage of rain water into the body of the entire structure. Thus, the dismantling and resetting of the affected portions was attempted. New stones were provided at missing places after filling the gaps by grouting with suitable mortar. One corner pillar which was missing was re-erected, other broken ones mended and new stone beams provided. Dislodged portions of walls were dismantled and reset. The two-tier plinth portion was also reset. Relaying of depressed flooring was attended to as well.

The Samudra Manthan Scene Gallery and the pavilion on either side were dismantled by the Angkor Conservancy during 1969-1970 and a plinth of the same kind reconstructed after providing a suitable foundation and drains. The dismantled architectural members of the gallery, lying scattered on the ground nearby for more than eighteen years, have been taken up for reconstruction of both the pavilions and the gallery. The rebuilding of the south-east pavilion was one up to a height of five metres from all sides up to the lintel levels. In this respect the earlier photographs were of great value.

PHASE III (1988-1989)

In the third phase the conservation of the southern library between the third and fourth enclosures began.

Stones were reset on the northern gallery and the porches and steps on the western gallery of the third enclosure were also dismantled and



2. *Apsara* in the second enclosure before treatment.



3. *Apsara* in the second enclosure after treatment.

reset. In the same enclosure repairs to the roof and filling of cracks was taken up along with the water-tightening. Reconstruction of the missing roof of the southern half of the fourth enclosure was carried out. A concrete apron was provided around the northern and southern library situated between the third and fourth enclosures. In the Samudra Manthan Gallery on the east, the semi-vaulted roof of the gallery was relaid with original stones.

PHASE IV (1989-1990)

During this phase further conservation work on the embankment of the moat on the eastern side was done.

The six porches on the northern, eastern, and southern galleries of the third enclosure were conserved scientifically. Loose stones were reset, the broken RCC beams were replaced with new ones.

In the Samudra Manthan Gallery on the eastern side of the third enclosure, the semi-vaulted roof which was dismantled earlier by the French was relaid. The old pillars which were totally weathered could not be re-used and have been replaced with pillars cast in RCC and suitably tinted to match the original pillars. Due to the weathering of structural members lying exposed to the sun and rain over a long period the re-erection of the semi-vaulted roof posed several difficulties. The stone joints of the vaulted roofs have been pointed in mortar suitably tinted to match the original. The work of the semi-vaulted roof in the Samudra Manthan Gallery is yet to be completed.

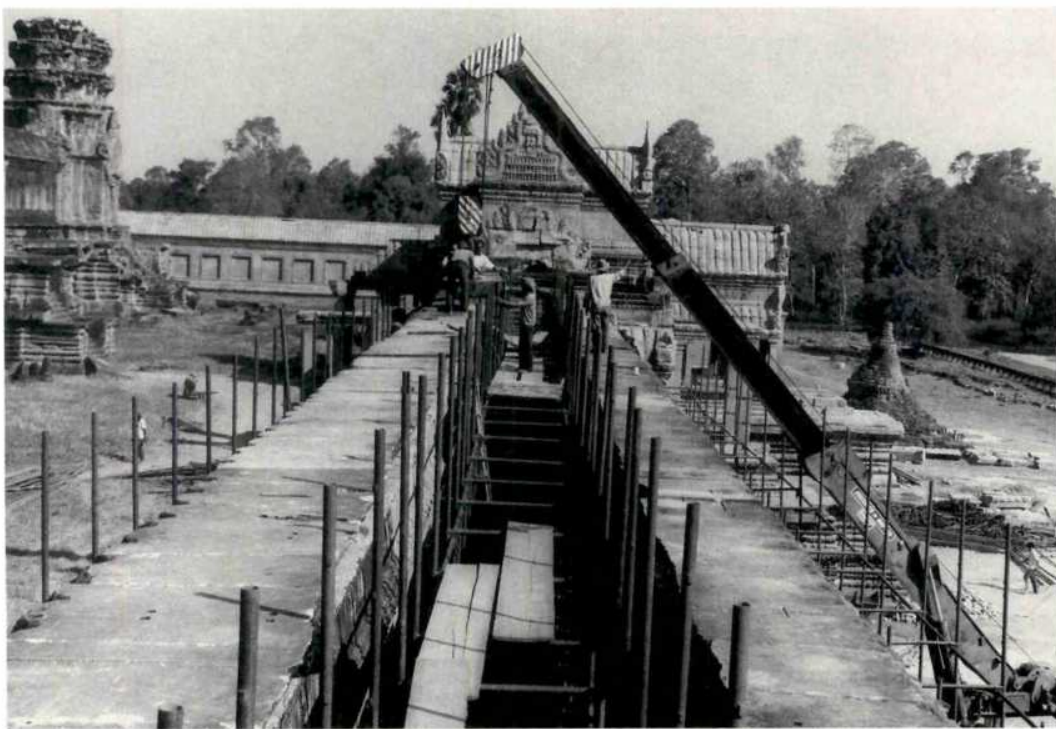
PERIOD: 1990-1991

- i) Reconstruction of Samudra Manthan Gallery.
- ii) Reconstruction of entrance north of Samudra Manthan Gallery.
- iii) Reconstruction of porch of the main entrance to the east.
- iv) Reconstruction of dismantled railing of the third enclosure.
- v) Reconstruction of stepped embankment of the moat on the west.

PHASE V (1990-1991)

This included work on the following:

- i) Entire first enclosure including five towers and exterior and interior walls.
- ii) Samudra Manthan Gallery including exterior and interior of the structure.



4. Samudra Manthan Gallery before conservation.



5. Samudra Manthan Gallery after conservation.



6. Gateway in second enclosure before treatment.



7. Gateway in second enclosure after treatment.

- iii) Recleaning and preserving western wall of third enclosure.
- iv) Entrance south of Samudra Manthan Gallery.
- v) Applying preservative coat to an area of 80,000 square metres.

PHASE VI (1991-1992)

The following repairs were executed during this phase:

- i) Eastern embankment and steps of moat north of main causeway.
- ii) Completion of the work of resetting and pointing of the northern and southern libraries.
- iii) Grouting and water-tightening of the towers and galleries of the second enclosure.

PHASE VII' (1992-1993)

Now for this phase the team is already there to complete the remaining work according to schedule.

CHEMICAL PRESERVATION

The principal agency of decay was rain water. The second potent cause of deterioration is the extensive micro-growth vegetation, such as

moss, lichen, and algae, all over the surface of the monument.

In view of the size of the monument the work has been taken up in a phased manner.

During the first two phases the chemical preservation work was confined to the western gateway and the northern and southern libraries between the third and fourth enclosures, the western corridor of the enclosure, and the esplanade.

During the third phase chemical preservation was confined to the exterior and interior of the northern corridor of the third enclosure. The work was also carried out on the northern-southern wing of the western corridor.

The fourth phase of chemical preservation was carried out on the vaulted roofs and walls of the eastern gallery of the third enclosure. Similarly, the vaulted roof and other structural members in the southern gallery were also treated by chemical preservation.

During the fifth phase chemical preservation of the galleries and towers of the second enclosure was undertaken.

It has been a privilege for India to have been responsible for carrying out conservation and

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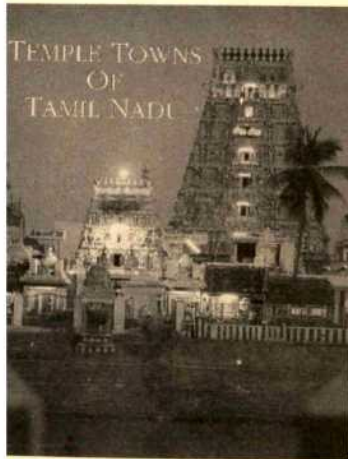
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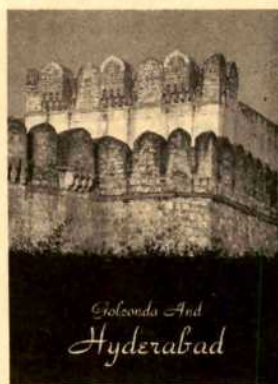


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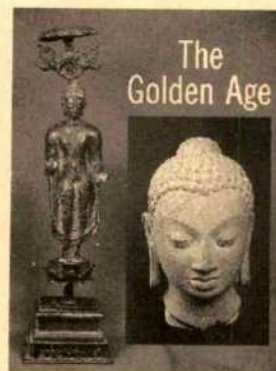
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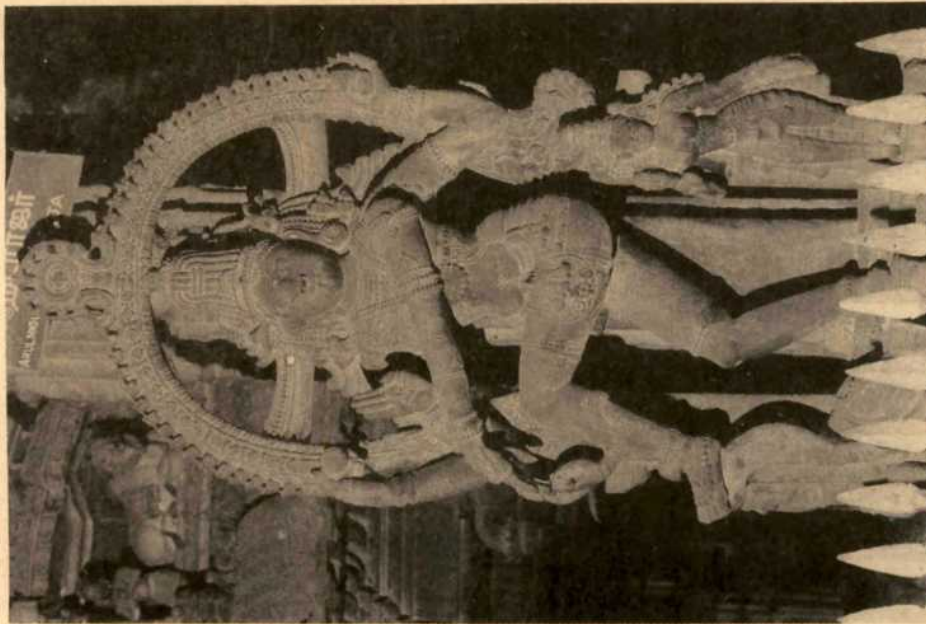
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preservation work at Angkor Vat. Inspired by the cultural ties of friendship with Cambodia, one hopes this rapport will continue in the future.

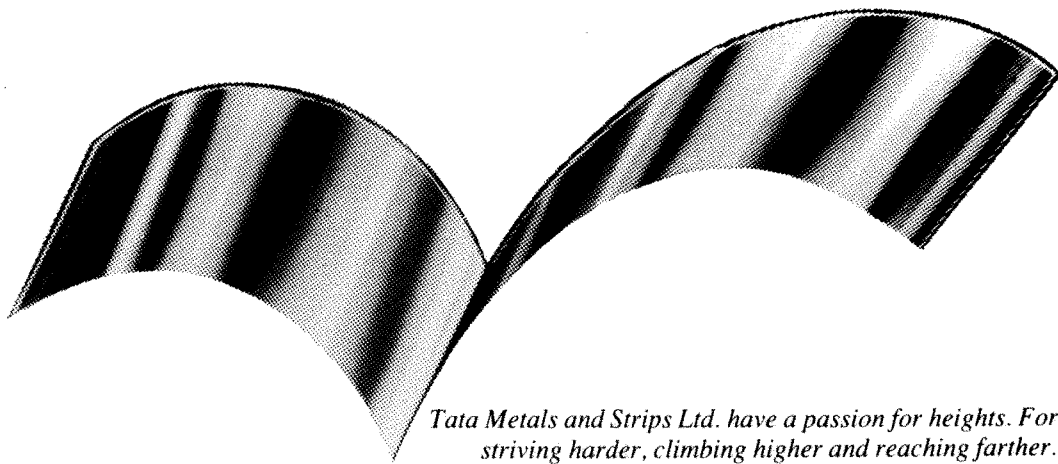
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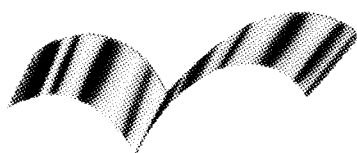
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Porosity	Density	Hardness	Sample No.	Loss on Evapora- tion	Loss on Ignition	S ₁ O ₂	R ₂ O ₃	CaO	Mgo	Total	
		on mho scale									
1. 11.8	2.40	4 to 5	182/90(1)	.19	3.08	71.74	17.36	3.85	.69	96.91	Chloride and Carbonate present in traces
2. 12.29	2.42	4 to 5	182/90(2)	.14	2.93	70.92	20.68	3.25	.76	98.68	
3. 10.80	2.51	3 to 4	182/90(3)	.18	2.65	68.90	23.10	3.35	.63	98.81	—do—
4. 19.49	2.15	5 to 6	182/90(4)	1.12	2.27	65.60	24.81	4.49	.80	99.09	Chloride present in traces
5. 17.50	2.51	3 to 4	182/90(1)	.93	3.05	74.55	15.21	4.01	.72	98.47	Chloride and Carbonate present in traces
6. 16.30	2.44	3 to 4	182/90(2)	.93	3.48	69.00	19.85	3.76	.82	97.84	—do—
7. —	—	—	182/90(3)	.60	4.12	71.96	18.32	3.46	.72	99.18	—do—
8. —	—	—	182/90(4)	.64	4.33	69.16	19.00	3.67	.91	97.71	—do—
9. 21.6	2.30	5 to 6	182/90(5)	1.22	2.95	66.40	21.49	4.10	.86	97.02	—do—
10. 12.20	1.62	3 to 4	182/90(6)	.75	2.79	70.90	19.53	4.26	.75	98.98	—do—
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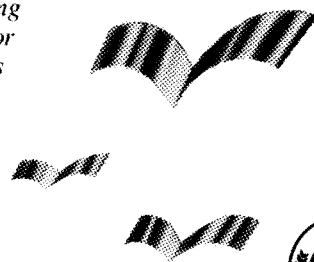
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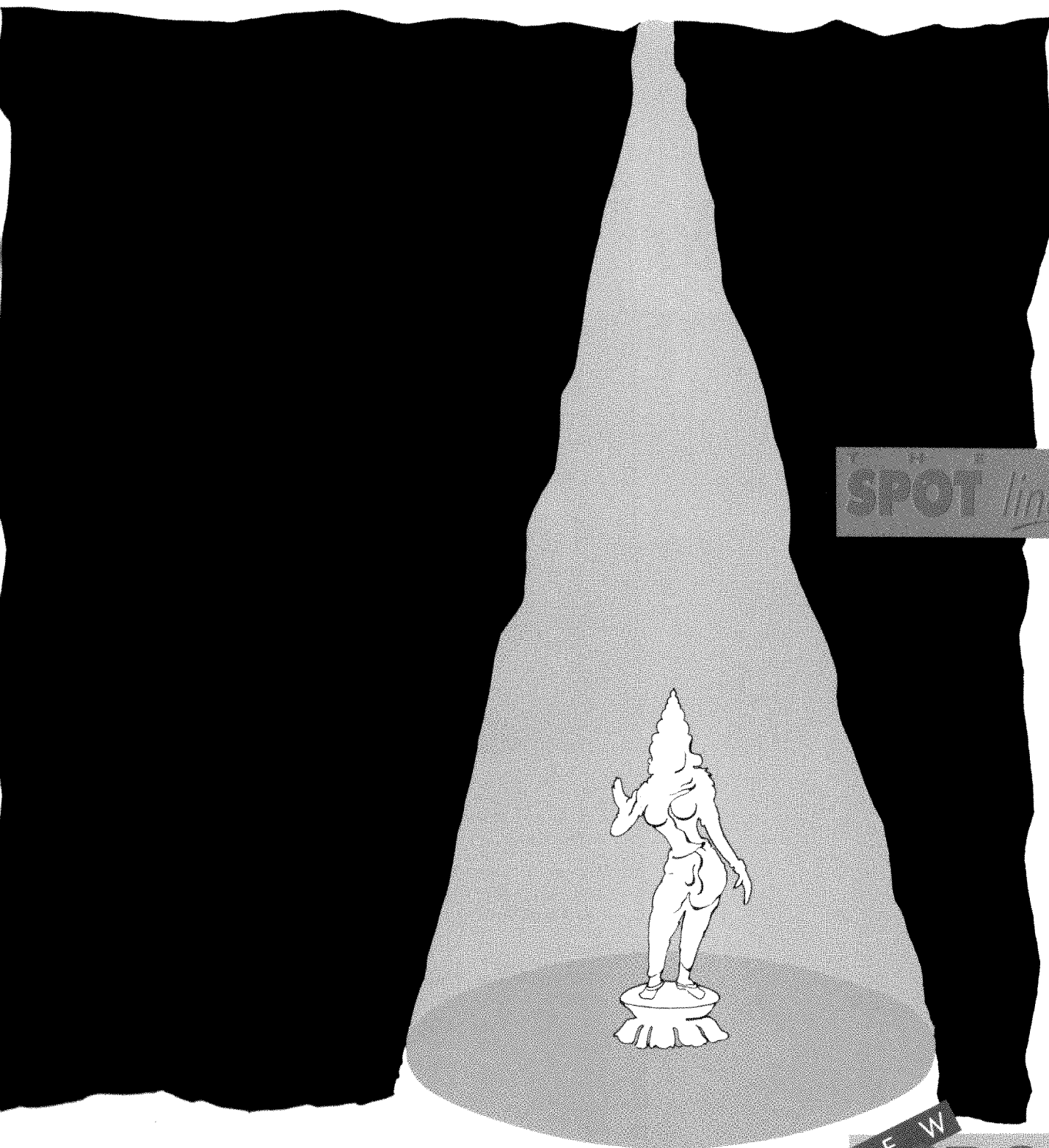
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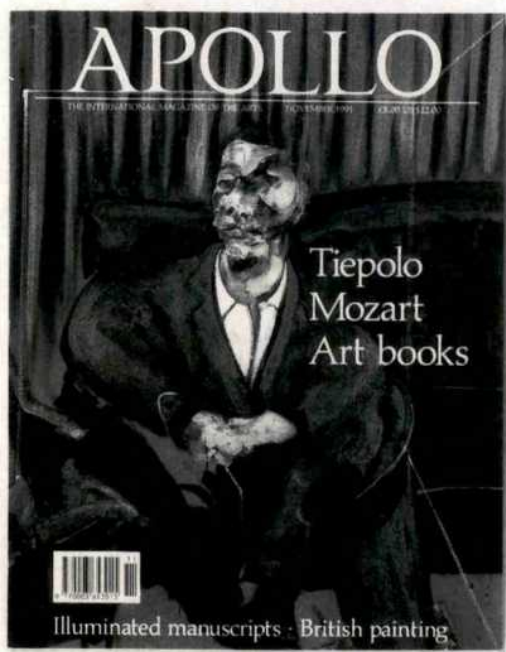
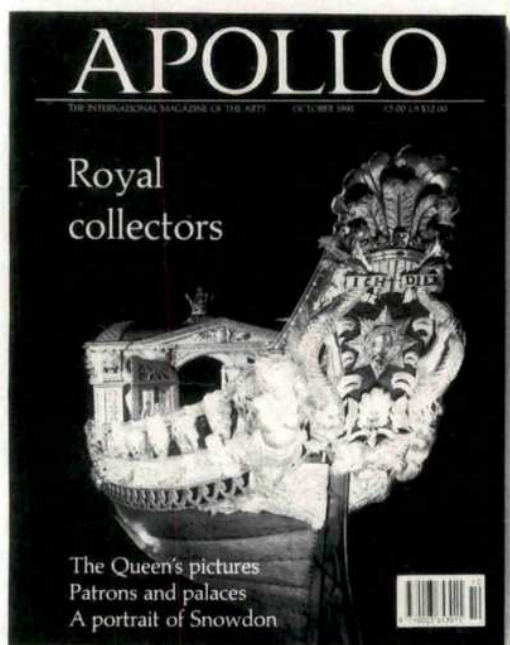
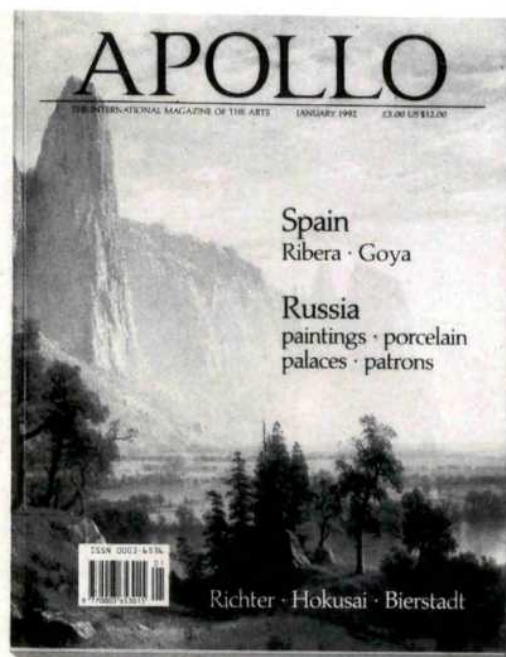
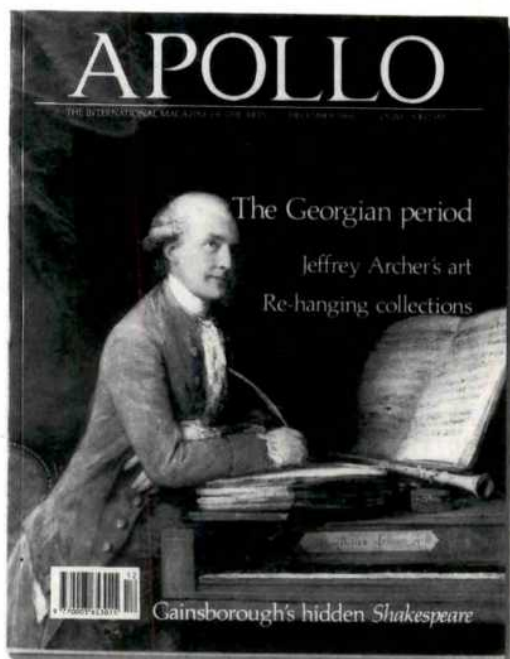


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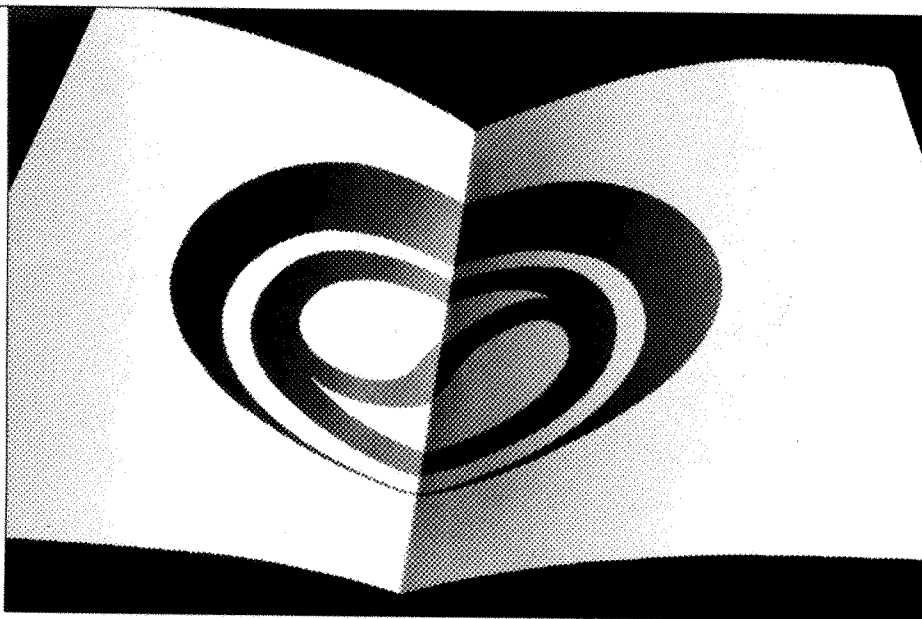


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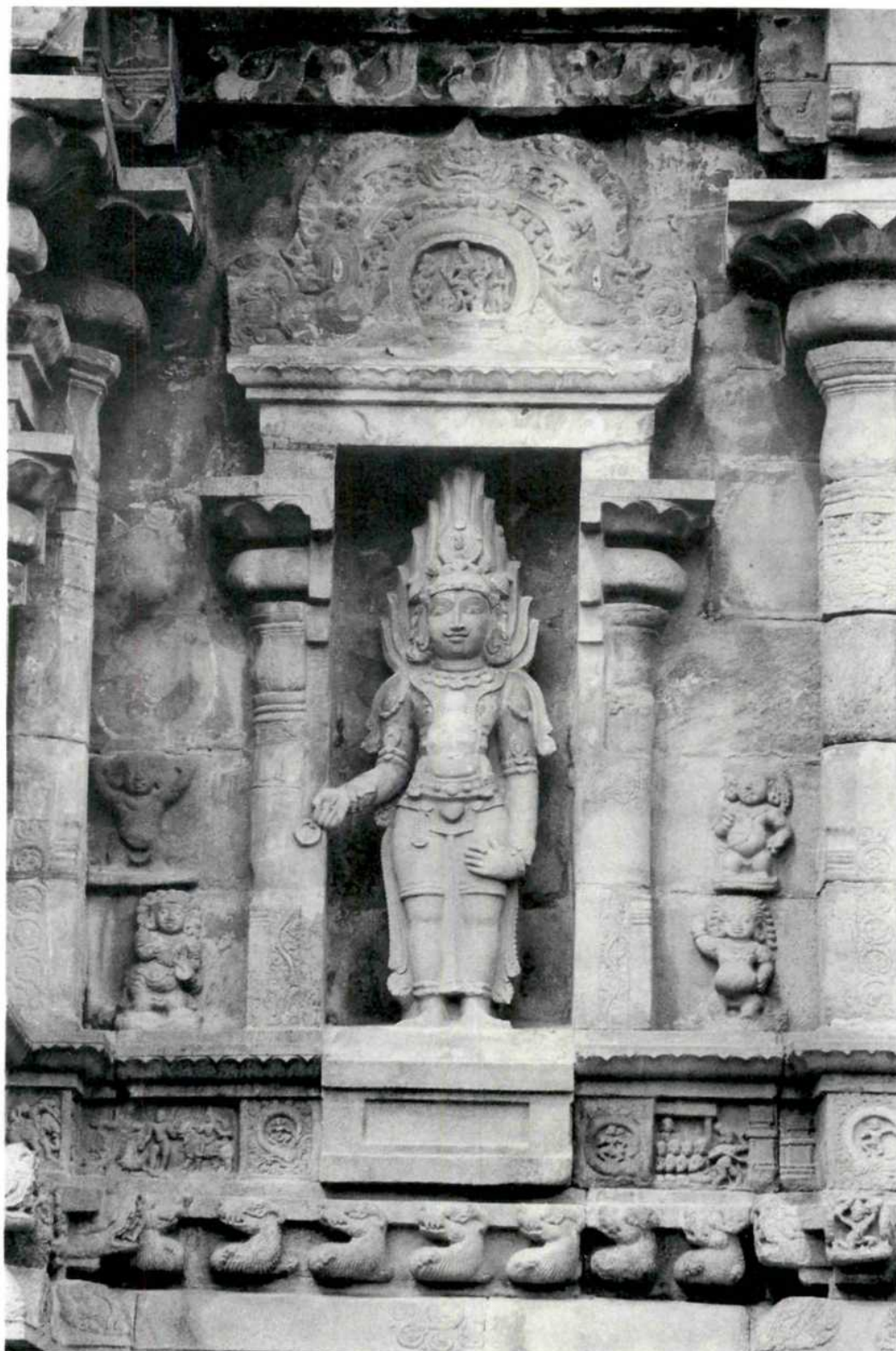
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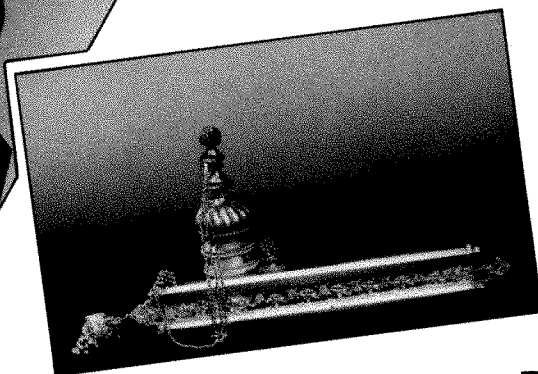
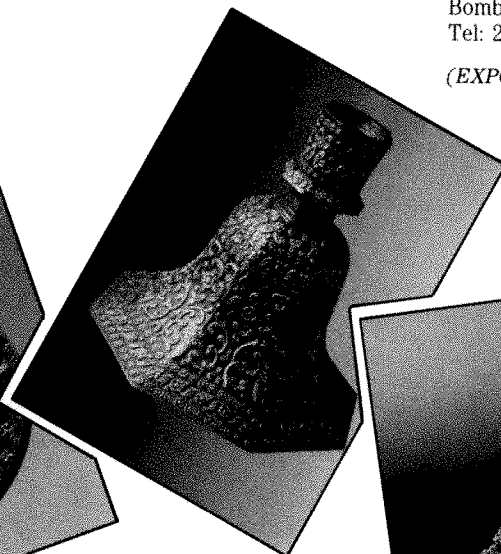
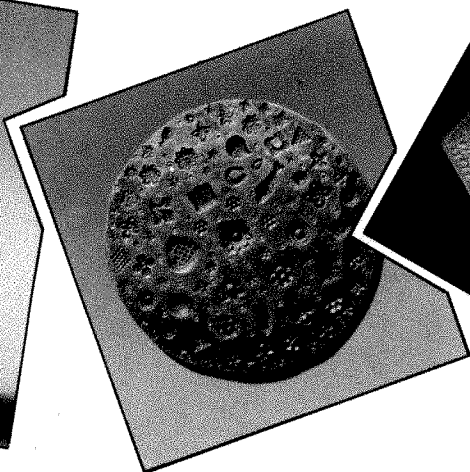
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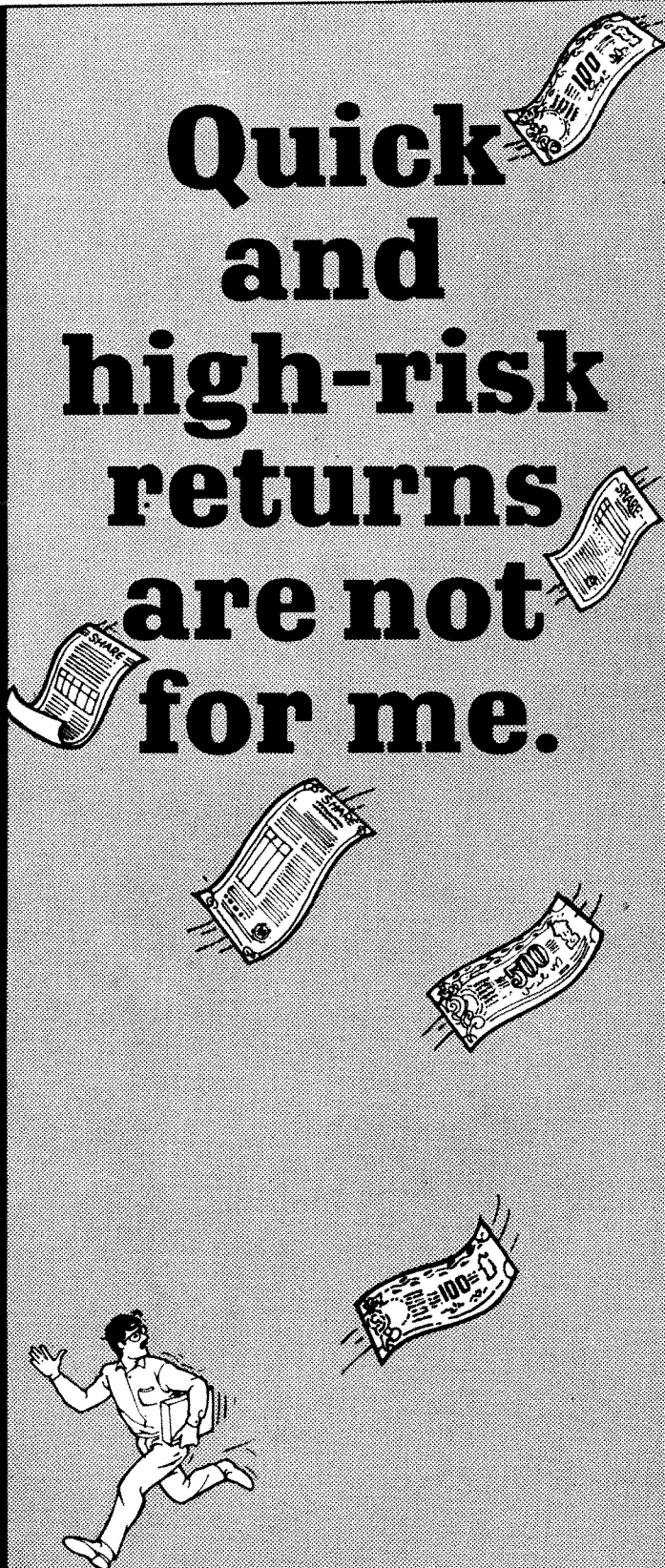
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The Philosophy Of Kathakali

D. Appukuttan Nair

If Kathakali has reason to exist because it is a form of art, what exactly is art? Somehow, the term eludes precise definition. The purpose of art may be *trayisadbhava*—that is, fulfilment of *dharma*, *artha*, and *kama*: ordained righteous duties, assets and resources, and desire. Sometimes, art leads to the realization that experience in the everyday world in the *jagrat* (wakeful) state is only a dream. Art may also shatter man's ego and make him realize that either by himself he is nothing or he is everything.

It is said that art transports one to the dream state of *swapna*. Is art to be understood as *maya* (illusion), with *avarana* (covering the ultimate reality—*brahman*) and *vikshepa* (a manifestation of that reality)? Or is it *adhyaropa*—something superimposed on the real? Is art a superstition, or blind faith based on the meditation of great seers who had a vision of the ultimate truth? Is it a manifestation of abstract concepts, or a creation which demands the transformation of the abstract into the concrete? Is it a replica of the cosmos, constrained in time and space? At the operational level, is art *bhava* (impression) or *rasa* (form of expression), *anukarana* (imitation) or *kridaniyam* (sport)?

If the aim of art is *ananda*—happiness ranging from enjoyment to bliss, how does one define *ananda* itself which covers a wide range of happy emotions, from the subjective particular to the objective universal. At a basic individual level, it is the immediate impulsive, sensuous pleasure or mere enjoyment, an entertainment, a diversion, a relaxation, or even titillation. At a popular level, it may mean merriment or gaiety, or revelry and festivity. In a still higher state *ananda* is rapture, unalloyed happiness, supreme satisfaction, and ecstatic bliss of a long-standing nature. At this point, the individual and the universal often coalesce.

Different forms of art awaken different levels of *ananda* in man. The real nature of man in terms of his response to art while seeking *ananda* should first be considered in order to have a clear understanding of art. Is man merely a physiological being, a combination of the many bodily systems and sense organs? If so, his experience of happiness can be confined to the physical, which is mainly centred around the pleasures of the senses. Thus, man's capacity to enjoy the various forms of happiness cannot be accounted for through a cognition of his physiology alone.

According to Indian *darsana* (philosophy), both man and the cosmos are made of *tattvas*, or concepts, and *panchabhuta*, or the five elements; *karmendriyas*, the five senses of action; the five general elements of perception; *jnanendriyas*, the five senses of perception; *manas*, the mind; *ahankara*, the ego; *buddhi*, the intellect; *prana*, life-breath; and ultimately *jivan*, life itself. The constitution of man may vary depending on the *tattwa*, but largely conforms to the above pattern. *Saiva darsana* concerns itself with thirty-six items (as against the twenty-five just discussed). It also includes theories that explain the manifestations of *prakrti*, or nature, and *purusha*, or man (corresponding in *natya*—drama—to *bhava* and *rasa*).

Shaivite philosophy additionally deals with the six principles of subjective reduction, such as the reduction of eternity to time, infinity to space, detachment to attachment, ultimate knowledge to limited knowledge, and the unlimited power of creation (where creation and destruction become one) to limited

< A *paccha* character: the typical gentle hero whose hands here depict a lotus.

spurts of creation. It also includes *maya* and five principles—the principle correlating feeling and consciousness (in *natya* this reflects the attitude of the one who experiences to the one who is experienced), the principle of identification—which is a universal experience (this may be related to *natya* where the unpleasant on the stage becomes pleasurable to the audience), the principle of being—which marks the beginning of experience, the principle of power—where the individual merges with the cosmos, and then the ultimate principle characterized by no experience—whereby one reaches *chidananda*, or the state of ultimate *ananda*. *Natya* shows a relation to each of these principles.

This knowledge derived from the scriptures may now be applied to the art of Kathakali. Since Kathakali is a performing art, the connoisseur, called the *sabrdayan*, can experience it through its performance alone. The difference between the experience of the real world and the experience of art performed on the stage is therefore to be taken into account. The real world as referred to here is the world which is made to appear so through the physical senses.

The world consists of the five fundamental elements, the first of which is *akasa* (literally, sky). Technically, *akasa* is pure space or a void—a subversion of *avakasa* which means “to make room”. No matter how much of it is occupied, it still offers room. *Akasa* is also the source of *sabda*, or sound. The element *vayu*, or air, suggests movement and indicates the gaseous state. It is the source of *sparsa*, or touch. The element *agni*, or fire, is *tejas*, or energy. This energy, which exists in the form of heat and light, is the source of *rupa*, or visual shape and form. The element *ap*, or water, indicates liquidity and is the source of taste, or *rasa*. *Prithvi*, or the earth, is the element which indicates the solid state; it is the source of smell, or *gandha*. Thus, through the five elements, there is a steady movement from the abstract to the concrete.

In the real world, all the five elements are operative, but only two are significant in Kathakali—*akasa* and *agni*. The void nature of *akasa* is suggested by the stage which is devoid of all equipment; its *sabda* is provided by the music and the drums. *Agni* is present in the guise of the flame in the lamp: the lamp is of vital importance in a Kathakali performance. *Rupa*, the visual quality of *agni*, is present in the various forms on the stage—colours, and the shapes and movements of the actors. It may be noted that *vayu*, the source of touch; *ap*, the source of taste; and *prithvi*, the source of smell, are absent because the *tanmatras*—touch, taste, and smell, have no real place in Kathakali.

Likewise, of the five *karmendriyas*, only three apply to Kathakali—the legs, the hands, and the mouth. The legs are used to dance, the hands for gestures, and the mouth for vocal music. The mouth is also used by certain characters to emit roars, yells, and cries. The action of the *karmendriyas* on the Kathakali stage, are the *vishayas*, or subjects, of the *jnanendriyas*—the eyes and ears of the connoisseur. The other three *jnanendriyas*—the nose, the tongue, and the skin, are not relevant to Kathakali.

The *ananda* derived through the use of the eyes and the ears using the action of the legs, the hands, and the mouth as its *vishaya*, is called *indriyananda* (sensual pleasure) or *vishayananda* (subject-oriented pleasure). These are transient and are therefore considered low levels of pleasure. *Indriyananda* lasts for only as long as its object of pleasure does.

A constituent higher than the *jnanendriyas* in the conceptual composition

of man, is the mind. The action of the Kathakali performer is called *karayit*, and is helped by the imaginative and retentive capacities of his mind. The imagination of the performer brought out through action is *karayitri pratibha*. This is met by the *bhavayitri pratibha*, the imaginative insight of the connoisseur. The *ananda* so derived is more enduring. It is *manasikananda*, mental delight.

Two other constituents higher than the mind in the constitution of man are *ahankara* and *buddhi*. At this level, the performer becomes conscious of his own prowess; it gives him strength to perform with confidence. The ego of the appreciative *sahridayan* in turn helps him gain a self-confidence that raises him to the level of the performer. However, since vacillation is one of the attributes of the mind, *manasikananda* is not steady, but the ego can interfere and give more stability to the *ananda*. In such instances, the ego shapes itself as *ahambodha*, which is a union of self-confidence and discrimination. The resulting *ananda* is called *ahambodhananda*. This form of a stabilized, self-conscious, discriminating type of appreciation leads to long-standing rapture. While *indriyananda* and the corresponding *vishayananda* are externally oriented, *manasikananda* and *ahambodhananda* are directed inwards. It is this that makes the latter timeless.

Yet another constituent is *prana*, or life-breath, which is infused into his actions by the performer, enlivening the performance. Endowed with *prana*, the performer becomes a replica of the *jivatma*—the living soul, drawing inspiration from the lamp which denotes *brahman*—the ultimate reality.

For the connoisseur, who until this point travels in the realm of duality, this could be the penultimate point of transcendence. He is to experience bliss which is non-dual, at which level there is no difference between beauty and ugliness; it is the realm where art and anti-art co-exist. It is the sphere where *srngara*, or love, can co-exist with *bibhatsa*, or disgust. This point of bliss is also the level of divine art—that is, art beyond art.

The dualistic realm of art is not pleasing to a philosopher-appreciator. The supreme *sahridayan* seeks the non-dualistic variety of art, where the artiste, the art-form, and the connoisseur become one.





A Three-dimensional Poetic Art

D. Appukuttan Nair

The dance forms of India, connoisseurs claim, trace their origin to the *Natyasastra* of Bharata Muni, which states that *natya* (drama) is “*lokavrtta anukaranam*” — *Natyasastra*, I, 112 (an imitation of the affairs of the world) and *nrttam* (dance) is “*kanchidartham na apeksbatekhalu kintu sobhaam prajanayet*” — *Natyasastra*, IV, 269 (a self-dependent entity to create beauty). Though Bharata Muni describes *natya* as projecting the lives and affairs of royalty, celestial beings, demons, and sages, his emphasis is generally on the treatment of worldly experiences, human actions, and situations as evident from his statement:

*Yoyam svabhaavolokasya sukhadukhasamanvitah
songaadyabhinayopeto naatyamityabbhideeyate.*

—*Natyasastra*, I, 119.

(The material world is compounded of both joys and sorrows. When these emotions are expressed and communicated through appropriate body movements and facial expressions, the result is *natya*.)

Thus, Bharata Muni’s *Natyasastra* primarily concerns itself with worldly affairs being presented on the stage through the art of *anukarana* (imitation).

Anukarana

The term *anukarana* has multiple levels of meaning and offers various interpretations. At the primary level, it is a physical imitation — an imitation of the external appearance and behaviour of a known model. This is mime and tends mostly to evoke laughter, with the mimic looked upon as a clown or jester.

Where a model is not readily available, an equivalent model is identified and its form and behaviour are conceived and given shape. This is humanistic and applicable mostly to historical characters. In many dance forms human traits are also ascribed a mythological character and this imitation of form is adopted.

Where neither a model nor its equivalent is available, a form is given to a conceptual creation. This applies to mythological characters like the ten-headed Ravana or a pseudo-humanized bird like *bamsa*, the swan. The ten-headed Ravana is actually made up with only one head and it is for the connoisseur to complete his form and figure in his imagination. While *Natyasastra* requires a swan to have the full form of a bird, on the Kathakali stage the bird is made up just like any hero, with indicative features of the beak and wings for identification.

The next, and ultimate, stage in *anukarana* transcends the mimetic in all respects, and attempts at meta-creation through imagination on the basis of the conceived form and behaviour. While *Natyasastra* makes use of the former two kinds of *anukarana*, Kathakali involves the latter two.

The four kinds of *abhinaya*

Basically, while the four kinds of *abhinaya*, or modes of aesthetic communication, mentioned in *Natyasastra* find general application in *natya*, they are at variance with Kathakali in theory and practice in several respects.

< A *katti* character: the aggressive anti-hero.

Natyasastra emphasizes the importance of the *vachika* (vocal) *abhinaya* where the artiste uses words, tones, and tunes such as *saptaswara*, *tristayi*, and *chaturvarna*. The Kathakali actor, on the other hand, not only avoids words or tunes but only ejects certain stylized sounds like roaring, shrieking, crying, and so on. Even the dialogue set to music is rendered by singers in the background. The actor depicts its gestural re-creation alone.

With regard to *angikabhinaya* — communication through body kinetics, Kathakali does not strictly follow the *mudras* (hand gestures) enlisted in *Natyasastra*. The Kathakali *mudras* are more stylized and symbolic.

The tenets of stage setting prescribed in *Natyasastra* with regard to



1. The commencement of a love scene between the *rajasic*, or aggressive, Ravana and his beloved Mandodari. Photograph: courtesy Margi.

abaryabhinaya (costumery) — *pushta* (model work), *sandhimam* (jointed objects), *vyajimam* (indicating objects), and *cheshtimam* (wrapped objects)—have no place in Kathakali. The stage is devoid of any setting to simulate the venue or situation. It is upto the actor to create them in the mind of the connoisseur through the movements of his body.

While *Natyasastra* disapproves of excessive jewellery and costume, Kathakali is extravagant in their use. The headgear suggested by Bharata Muni for women characters is absent in Kathakali. The transcendental Kathakali overlooks regional variations in the complexion of characters, as is specified in *Natyasastra*. While maintaining the maximum possible distance from the appearance and behaviour of objects and beings in the mundane world, the make-up, costumes, and ornamental accessories serve to exaggerate the expressive potential of the actor. In *mukhabhinaya* (facial expressions) the focal centres of expression—the lips and eyes—are made to look conspicuous by being painted in contrasting colours — bright red against a background of dark green or black, or by elongation, and so on. The field of expression, when it has to be subtle, is the face. To densify the expression the green face is provided with a wide white border. This is a concept falling far beyond the purview of *Natyasastra*.

Natyasastra speaks of *sattwikabhinaya*, as “*lokasvabhaavaanukaranaaccha naatyasya satvameepsitam*” — *Natyasastra*, VII, 1.94 (*natya* projects the worldly emotions, situations, and experiences), which is essentially *laukika* (worldly). Referring to *sattwikatwa*, the text states: “The various emotions portrayed by the character in any dramatic presentation have to be mentally experienced by the performer for the performance to be successful. Only a person who is mentally involved in sorrow, can effectively depict the emotion of sorrow on the stage. The same applies to happiness. This is *sattwikatwa*.”

Kathakali follows a system which is contrary to this precept of *sattwikatwa*. The Kathakali artiste does not make any effort to internalize the emotions of the character in this way. The Kathakali mode pertaining to this aspect is technically referred to as *pakarnattom* (multiple transformational acting). The actor who performs Bhima’s role in *Kalyanasougandhikam* acts out *ajagarakabalitam* first as a high and mighty elephant, then as a python trying to swallow the elephant; then again as the elephant struggling to rescue its limbs from the mouth of the python; the very next moment, as a famished lion who jumps on the elephant and tears its head and drinks its blood; and the next, as the struggling elephant who has to fight both the predators. Is it possible, then, for the actor involving his mind with any one of these roles to adopt a single, sustained *stayi bhava* (permanent emotion). Equally irrelevant is the *Natyasastra* tenet, “*Yato drshti stato manah*” (the mind should follow the eyes) to a Kathakali actor who has to project simultaneously the emotions of anger and sorrow in each eye. The Kathakali actor, therefore, cannot treat *sattwa* as “the mind”. Nor can he express *sattwika bhavas* (spontaneous expressions arising out of the mind). Thus, the actor, whose costume is made of thick loose jackets, cannot show the spontaneous expressions of horripilation or sweat; nor can his face painted in strong oil colours show *vaivarnya* (change of colour); nor his powerful silence express *gadgada* (stuttering voice) and other

expressions stipulated in *Natyasastra*.

If such natural worldly expressions have no place, then what is *sattwa* in Kathakali? It is *prana*, or life-breath, which gives life to *abhinaya*—and that is the *sattwikabhinaya*, the *abhinaya* utilizing life-breath. It is called *rasa vayu* in Kathakali parlance.

In *Natyasastra*, in the chapter on *bhashavidhana* (linguistic usage), seven languages used by the people of different races and regions are referred to. Kathakali, however, uses a single superworldly language of gestures—be it to symbolize the king of the gods or a carpenter.

The term *nata*, used in *Natyasastra* as representing a single character, does not suit the Kathakali actor, as the latter does not confine himself to performing the role of a single character; in the *pakarnattom* of Kathakali, the actor assumes several roles. He is therefore more aptly called the *veshakkaran* (role-player). The dance forms conforming to the *natyadharmi* (stylized acting) set by *Natyasastra* are Kuchipudi and Bhagavatamela. Kathakali transcends these *natyadharmi* standards of *Natyasastra*.

Kathakali—a three-dimensional poem

If Kathakali goes beyond the concepts of Bharata Muni's *Natyasastra*, what else does it follow? Based on the *attakkatha* (literary text of Kathakali) and dependent on the auditory art of Kathakali music and percussion, it is re-created into a visual art through the imagination, skill, and genius of the actor and aesthetically transmuted into *rasa*, rapture in the mind of the *sabrdayan*, or connoisseur. Thus, Kathakali is more *kavyatmaka* (poetic) than *natyatmaka* (dramatic).

The chapter on *vakyavidhana* (modes of address) in *Natyasastra* states that the forms of address for men are *bhagavan* (lord), *arya* (brahmin), *raja* (king), *amatya* (minister), *kumara* (adolescent boy), and *vatsa* (dear one). Women are addressed as *bhagavati* (goddess), *bhattini* (queen), *bhadre* (good lady), *swamini* (royal one), and *ajjuke* (courtesan). Such a mode of addressing the characters by name or status is not followed in *attakkatha* literature. The terms in Kathakali are usually descriptive and poetic and are not intended to invite response from the addressee. They are descriptive in poetic terms capable of expression through the face, fingers, and body. Panchali, for instance, is addressed as *pankajekshane* (lotus-eyed one), *pancha saayaka nilaye* (abode of Cupid) and Damayanti as *kuvalaya vilochane* (you, with eyes like the blue lotus), *kisalayaadbare* (you, with lips soft as tender leaves), *chaaruseele* (the one with lovely ways). Lalita is called *sukapole* (the one with “good” cheeks), while Mandodari is addressed as *saradindu manohara vadane* (one with the face as beautiful as the autumn moon).

As though a single descriptive form of address is inadequate for poetic relish, the performer goes on to a further series of poetic descriptions brimming with aesthetic embellishment, bringing out various elements of the exquisite charm, grace, bloom, and glow of the woman being described.

It is to be noted that these elaborate descriptions of the heroine's attractive attributes by the hero are only a prelude. The *uddipakas* (stimulants) of the

particular romantic situation—a lovely garden, the buzzing of bees, the chirping birds, and moonlight—are extensively acted out by means of *chollyattom* (textual interpretation) and *ilakiyattom* (extra-textual interpretation). It is such amorous scenes, called *srngarapadams*, in Kathakali that offer the greatest scope for *abhinaya*.

The story of the Kathakali text is not important and it is when the forward movement of the plot is arrested, and the highly emotional love scene is interposed in very slow tempo, that the art of a Kathakali performance reaches its zenith at the cosmic level—where it becomes sublimated three-dimensional poetry for imaginative, visual, and auditive relish.

It therefore means that a good Kathakali performance should be judged by its poetic values. The poetic purpose, the poet's qualities, and the appreciator's qualifications are the relevant yardsticks to be employed in evaluating a performance. Here, the singer, the drummer, and the actor have all, in a sense, to be "poets". The connoisseur, too, is essentially a poet endowed with imagination and receptive skill.

If *sabda*, or word, and *artha*, or meaning, together form the *sarira*, or body of poetry, *vachika*, *angika*, and *abhaya* can be said to constitute the *sarira* of Kathakali. The descriptions in *ilakiyattom* and *pakarnattom* serve as embellishments. With regard to the soul of poetry, divergent views prevail. Yet, Abhinavagupta's verse on *rasa* which states, "*tena rasa eva vastuta aatma vastualankaaradhvani tu sarvathaa rasam pratiparyavasyete*" (*rasa* is the soul of poetry) is widely accepted. Likewise, it is *rasabhinaya* that constitutes the soul of Kathakali.

Kavyoddesyam

To delight, instruct, praise, and achieve the four goals of life is considered the *kavyoddesyam*, or objective, of poetry. But poetry is essentially *kantasammitatayopadesam* (like the ideal wife who reforms her husband through advice rendered charmingly).

The themes for *attakkathas* were always drawn from Hindu mythology, which were created to convey philosophical messages through an acceptable narrative medium of legends. While these legends satisfied only the mind, they were made more appealing to the other senses of sight and sound through attractive forms, shapes, colours, dances and rhythmic ensembles, and music. The transformation of the legend from mythology added two more beautiful dimensions to convey the philosophy.

What is this philosophical message? The cosmos is a concretized manifestation of the abstract *brahman* which is inconceivable. This concretization is achieved through *maya* (illusion). The pseudo-creation of cosmos, which is really a transformation, is only a myth and the activities in *jagrat* (the wakeful state) are just mythical as in a dream.

How is this conveyed through Kathakali? The *kalivilakku*, or lamp, on the Kathakali stage with the flame symbolizes *brahman*. The curtain representing *maya*, which when held represents *avarana*, shields the real. When removed, it represents *vikshepa* which exposes the concrete cosmos in the process of genesis. As the first stage in the genesis was the creation of

the primordial sound—*om*—it is played through the conch, followed by the rhythmic sound of the waves in the ocean, which was the second stage in the genesis. This is portrayed through the sound of the *maddalam* (horizontal drum) to the accompaniment of the metallic gong and cymbals. The solidification process was the third stage, shown when the curtain is held again. To rhythmic accompaniment on the drums, gong, and cymbals, two actors dressed incompletely in female roles, dance behind the curtain to represent an intermediate stage in the genesis. This is called *todayam*. It is followed by *purappad*, which signifies the full-grown man and woman, and the development of his faculties through four stages referred to as the four “looks”. Next follows *manjutara*, which stands for the union of *purusha* and *prakrti* (man and nature), with *melappadam*, symbolizing cosmic rhythms. After this the story is presented depicting certain affairs of the world. The performance concludes with *dbanasi*, the last player dancing to the accompaniment of an auspicious stanza. The connoisseur who has been entranced, is awakened as if from a dream, with the idea conveyed to him that just as the play appears a dream to him, so also are the events in his wakeful state part of an illusory dream.

Kathakali attempts to transport the spectator to a world beyond the material or physical; one that transcends regional, territorial, or even social barriers and creates a make-believe world where petty strife and tribulations are condemned. The carpenter in *Bakavadbom*, who like an ordinary mortal chews and spits out betel-leaf, and the mahout in *Kamsavadbom* who speaks Malayalam, are introduced to provide comic contrast to the more serious scenes. On the Kathakali stage human character and worldly affairs are regarded as flimsy and comic.

The appropriateness of human actions in the material world and the logic of spatio-temporal existence have no place in Kathakali. Matali and Arjuna, for instance, journeying from the earth to the heavens, are depicted as travelling not in an aeroplane but in a horse-drawn chariot. This is acted out by the performer through appropriate gestures of the body without moving an inch. In *Kalyanasougandhikam*, Bhima’s long, arduous journey through the jungles is indicated by just turning around once on the stage. If one misses this vital point, one is likely to find fault with Nala who, instead of attempting to rescue Karkotaka, caught in the fire, exchanges pleasantries with him.

The *abhinaya* in Kathakali is essentially symbolic. When there is a dialogue between two characters, the actors do not face each other. The “look” of one actor appears in front of the other and not on his face because it is not the actors who are conversing, but the characters who are projected through actors. Similarly, when the hero and heroine embrace, there is no bodily contact; they do not even face each other. They simply stand side by side, facing the audience, symbolically extending their hands around each other. Every action of love, including kissing, involves not the lips, but the hands and eyes, which symbolically indicate the process. Sweating, likewise, is represented by fanning oneself profusely; horripilation, by shivering from head to toe; and shedding tears, by gesticulating with the fingers.

The various emotions, therefore, are not internalized by the actor. The body with its different features is considered a *darpana*, or mirror, which gives only a reflection and not an imprint.

Kavyahetu

If Kathakali is viewed as a poem, the requirements of poetry it satisfies—the *kavyahetu*, or reason for poetry—are interesting to observe.

A poet, according to Indian poetics, should have *pratibha* (imagination), *vyutpatti* (scholarship), and *abhyasa* (training).

Pratibha is held to be an extraordinary capacity, more innate than acquired. The poetic scholar, Mammata, defines it as “*prajnaam navanavollekha saalineem pratibhaam viduh*” (*pratibha* is the imaginative quality in the artiste which introduces the imaginative spectator to better and newer ideas). In his *Dhvanyalokalochanam*, Abhinavagupta elaborates: “*Sakti pratibhaanam varnaneeya vastu vishaya nootanollekha saalitvam*” (only an artiste with rare insight can present his material in a new light).

It is this insight of the artiste which makes Krishnan Nair’s presentation of “*kuvalaya vilochane*” seem fresh every time it is enacted. In the hands of an unimaginative artiste, however, the performance would strike one as stereotyped since *pratibha* alone, by its very nature, can enable the performer to provide colourful variations. This presence of *pratibha* lends a unique poetic quality to Kathakali.

Vyutpatti enables the imagination of both the writer and the performer to blossom. In *Chandralokam*, Jayadeva observes that *pratibha* is the seed, *vyutpatti* the soil, and *abhyasa* the water needed to generate good poetry. Bharata Muni too has commented on the element of *vyutpatti*. He says: “One should be proficient in the numerous literary and scientific texts. The knowledge of etymology, verse, diction, epics, and rhetoric is required for producing a good work of art.”

The actor should also be well-versed in Hindu mythology for *ilakiyattom* and literary knowledge for *cholliyattom*.

Abhyasa demands that the poet should have a lifelong training in literature and a flair for composing poems, which should lend a successful interpretation by the actor on stage and allow scope for an imaginative descriptive, emotional setting.

The Kathakali actor should, throughout his life, undergo rigorous body training which would enable him to improve the suppleness of his body, eyes, and limbs, in turn enlivening the performance and imparting a heightened quality to the *rasabhinaya*. The performance of *Narakasuravadh*, for example, is based on the tenth section, chapter fifty-nine of *Sri Mahabagavatam*. In it there is only a slight indication of the abduction of the celestial women by Narakasura. In the sixty-third chapter of *Harivamsam*, this episode is thus mentioned: “He is notorious for having abducted seven *gandharva* maidens, seven damsels, and several other celestial maidens.”

References to such incidents are noticeably brief in the epic source material. In the *attakkatha*, however, the writer has introduced characters like Nakratundi and Jayanta and re-created the episode by linking other incidents to the original. Kartika Tirunal Tampuran, for instance, did this to suit the scope of the Kathakali performance. He re-created the episode in *Harivamsam* by creating a demoness, Nakratundi, as Narakasura’s accomplice. He describes her as follows: “The cruel Nakratundi with her fearful teeth is the demoness who kills

heroic men; she drinks the fresh blood of the kings and gods; she kills and wears lions as her ear-ornaments; her eyes spit fire and her sound is thunder-like, her huge knees would scare all." Nakratundi with her repulsive form, cruel nature, and despicable conduct is thus introduced in the *attakkatha*.
The actor restructures the dictum *vakya rasatmakam kavya* (words determine



2. The gentle *sattwika* hero Nala initiates another love scene, with Damayanti. Photograph: courtesy Margi.

the aesthetic relish of poetry) into *karma rasatmakam vakya* (stage acting determines aesthetic relish). While the *attakkatha* writer employs the verbal medium to express himself, the actor fulfils his role through action.

One is first introduced to the frightful *tiranokku* ("curtain look") of Nakratundi. To suit her barbarous nature, she has the *tooppu* (twigs and leaves) and to indicate her *raudra* (fearsome) nature, the curtain which is held up, is once again brought down by her with force. She makes a quick turn, swirls in a circle, plants one foot on the *pidta* (wooden stool), and takes a leap forward. All her gestures are violent and crude. Her constant shaking of the limbs and the body, swirling movements, and erotic gestures and behaviour are repulsive. She inspects her own body and feigns disgust, brings her hair to the nose and dismisses it as foul-smelling, runs her fingers through it and finding it knotted, pulls out the loose strands and blows them into the air. Then, having been refused water, she squeezes milk out of her own breast and mixes it with a paste to apply the same on the forehead; but dissatisfied, lets out a howl. She adds on to this despicable, revolting gesticulation by pulling faces at her playmates, and fatigued after playing the ball game and dancing, swabs the sweat off her body.

What is described above is the elaborate enactment of a particular situation which the *attakkatha* writer has described in a few words. Nakratundi, who is enamoured and aroused by Jayanta, reveals her contemptible and base erotic nature; but when she disguises herself as the charming Lalita, her actions become graceful, refined, and attractive.

Similarly, the characters of Simhika and Lalita in *Kirmiravadhom* do not exist in the original texts and are creations of Kottayam Tampuran, the *attakkatha* writer. The inspiration for him and Kartika Tirunal to create such characters must have been the *Surpanakbankom* of Kudiyaattom.

The *attakkatha* writer, through his *pratibha*, *vyutpatti*, and *abhyasa*, picks a seemingly insignificant piece from the original work, and by setting it to Kathakali music, gives it an auditive dimension. He renders it visual by adding to it the various gestures and movements typical of Kathakali, effecting a total re-creation of the original work of art. A good *attakkatha* should possess this innate potential to yield to such elaboration. Kartika Tirunal exploits such a situation when he remoulds the story of Narakasura by creating Nakratundi, using her to precipitate the crisis which hurts the vanity of Narakasura and ultimately leads him to take revenge on Indra. Nakratundi's *attom* (performance) is an instance of the crudest *bibhatsa* (disgust) mixed with cruelty. The transformation from the graceful Lalita, who tries to entice Jayanta into the vengeful and hateful Nakratundi, and again into the demoness that slights the haughty Narakasura, is closely followed by the latter's fury and his consequent preparation for battle. Thus goes the versatility and vividness of the visual aspect. Here lies the uniqueness of the *attakkatha*. The actor should be sufficiently equipped and trained to effectively exploit the possibilities offered by the *attakkatha*.

There are instances in Kathakali where one actor, by means of his vivid imagination, rubs against his fellow actors' imagination, with the spark generated growing into a flame and then a blaze of imaginative acting. During the performance of *Kalyanasougandhikam*, Bhima describes Panchali as:

“*Paanchaala raaja tanaye, pankajekshane, pancha saayaka nilaye*”, and continues.

When Bhima refers to Panchali as “*Paanchaala raaja tanaye*” (the daughter of the king of Panchala), what is suggested is the latter’s royal past, her opulence, majesty, and dignity. Bhima’s face should reflect *smṛti* (recollection), followed by his appreciation of her greatness. Her own response should be a sidelong, loving glance befitting her royal status. When Bhima remarks on the sheer beauty of her lotus-eyes, her glance loses some of its earlier gravity and becomes more soft and erotic. Thus encouraged, when he beckons her with “*pancha saayaka nilaye*” (the very abode of love), the scene becomes pervaded with *srngara* in all its splendour and beauty. When Bhima begins “*tanchaate...*” the shy Panchali should respond by refuting the statement, magnanimously admitting that his presence has enabled her to overcome the worst tribulations.

The mood of romance is heightened by the presence of the soft, gentle breeze which serves as the *uddipaka* (stimulant). The breeze is described as swaying and is intoxicated by the fragrance absorbed from the flower gardens. The swaying movement is indicated by the word “*chaanchadi*”, conveying the mood of intoxication. These lines prepare the audience for those that follow: “*Vaatena vatsulatayeva upaneetam chetobaram parimalam atimohana divyapushpam.*” (The fragrance of the beautiful divine flower carried by the breeze prompts Panchali to depute Bhima to fetch more of the same flower for her). In fact, on the pretext of being sent in search of a flower, Bhima, the younger brother of this time cycle is carried to the presence of the elder one, Hanuman, of the previous time cycle while the father, Vayu, rejoices at their meeting. Hence, in *Kalyanasougandhikam*, the wind (Vayu) is the stage manager, called *sutradhara*.

When Bhima calls Panchali “*panchama koojita sukokile*”, the song of the cuckoo, which is a stimulant, blends with the *alambana*—the object, which is Panchali herself. He further describes her as “*ninchala... kamale*” (your lively eyes have put the deer to shame, who has run away in fear) to add “*varika silaatale*” (come to the hard rocky bed). When he thus invites her, Panchali should sweetly respond saying that, with him by her side, even the hard surface would be a comfortable feather-bed.

Another example would be Damayanti’s acting of “*saamyamakannorudyaanam*” (this garden beyond comparison). When she draws his attention to the incomparable garden, Nala equates her with the garden. When she says that it is enchanting, he gestures that like the queen of the garden, she is even more enchanting. When Damayanti says, “*Graamyam nandanavanamaramyam chaitrarathavum*” (the garden of Indra is inferior to this garden and the garden of Kubera is also less beautiful), Nala responds with gestures: “Indra came in quest of you because your beauty excelled that of his queen, Indrani. Agni was eager to possess you because his own wife, Swaha, could not please him any more. Likewise, even Yama and Varuna sought you. But it was I who got you. This garden seems brighter than the celestial garden only because of your presence.” When she chimes in, “*Kankeli champakaadikal poothu nilkunnu, sanke vasantamaayaatam*” (the *champaka* and *asoka* flowers have already blossomed, so I doubt that spring has just

arrived), he responds, “That is not *kankeli* (the *asoka* flower), but your lips. That is not *champaka*, but your face. You have brought in spring.” When she says, “*Bhringaali nirayunnu, paadala padaliyil kim ketakangalil mrgaankanudikkayalli*” (the bees are swarming among the *padala* flowers, and among the *ketaka* flowers is not the moon rising?) he gestures: “That isn’t the swarm of bees, but your lovely dark hair. And that is not the moon rising. It is your beautiful face.” He then establishes his inference: “The *asoka* and *champaka* blossom in spring, the *padala* in summer, and the *kaita* in the rainy season. It is madness to assume that they have blossomed simultaneously. Therefore I naturally infer that the *asoka* is your soft body and the moon your lovely face.”

The art of Kathakali is thus an uninterrupted flow, a seemingly unbroken chain in which the actor, playwright, singer, and drummer are all poets in their own way. The text grows in audio-visual dimensions when it evolves into Kathakali.

The qualities of a *sabrdayan*

What, then, is the role of the *sabrdayan*, or connoisseur, who is to absorb the essence of the performance?

He should definitely have the qualities of *pratibha*, *vyutpatti*, and *abhyasa*, and equate himself with the creative writer in order to imbibe the essence of the play. In *Kavyamimamsa*, Rajasekharan says, “Only an enlightened connoisseur can enjoy a good work of art. He should be one who delights in hearing the *suktas* (philosophical doctrines), one who relishes it with *rasa*; he should attempt to discern the implied levels of meaning in every stroke.”

Only a *tattwabbhinivesi* (philosophically-oriented person) will be able to fully appreciate a Kathakali performance. *Sabda*, the word in poetry, corresponds to the *angikabhinaya* of the Kathakali artiste. To relish the *rasabhinaya* of the performer, to look for subtler levels of meaning, and to distinguish the superior from the mediocre are some of the requisites of the *sabrdayan*. When there is a dearth of such a selective, appreciative audience (as happens often), the artiste loses his zest for giving a brilliant performance. Here, one is reminded of Kalamandalam Krishnan Nair’s observations about the need for a competent audience. He had been often disappointed with the general enthusiasm for *raudra* Bhima, Narasimha, and Chudala Harischandra. A challenging enactment of Nala’s “*Kuvalaya vilochane*”, Bhima’s “*Paanchaala raaja tanaye*”, Dharmaputra’s “*Baale, kel nee*”, or Arjuna’s “*Kanja dala lochane*”, may often go unappreciated. Only a select few can bring themselves to imbibe the essence of such stirring performances, which in turn encourages the artiste. A devoted artiste may even feel guilty when he has sacrificed art to cater to popular taste by ignoring the true *sabrdayan*. But as Kalidasa says in *Sakuntalam*: “If knowledge is to be validated, it should be appreciated by an expert; even a trained scholar lacks self-confidence.”

In *Raghuvamsam* he says, “The quality of gold can be assessed only when it is subjected to a fire-test. Similarly, the quality of a work can be assessed only when it is tested against the mind of a *sabrdayan*.”

Rajasekharan says, “Just as a flower which blossoms on the tree is aided by

the breeze to spread its fragrance, a work of art which is the product of a creative mind is hailed by the competent reader.”

What are the other requisites of the connoisseur? Abhinavabharati refers to him as one who has insight and is capable of experiencing finer sentiments. Rajasekharan divides *pratibha* into *karayitri* (active) and *bhavayitri* (responsive) and assigns them to the writer and the reader respectively. In the *Lochanam*, he is thus described: “The *sahridayan* should have the innate ability to experience poetry which he cultivates through relentless practice, and should identify himself with the object described in the performance, thereby establishing a rapport with his own aesthetic sensibility.”

In the chapter on *siddhivyanjakam* (review of the success of drama) in the *Natyasastra*, Bharata Muni refers to two types of audiences — the *prasnika* (assessor) and the *prekshaka* (spectator). The former should be of noble birth, possess a calm temperament, be magnanimous, and should have a thorough knowledge of the sciences, art, architecture, music, language, stage equipment, and costumery. He does not, however, offer such stipulations for the *prekshaka* who should be even-tempered, virtuous, one who is able to see beneath the surface, and reject the chaff for the grain. Bharata Muni insists on the *prasnika* having higher qualities, since the responsibility of judging a work of art rests with him.

The Kathakali connoisseur may be called a *kazhchakkaran* (spectator). While the actor performs his role with the help of stylized sounds and bodily gestures, the connoisseur makes use of his sensory organs (mainly the eyes and ears) to absorb the work of art. While the actor puts to conscious use his innate skill which is enhanced by constant practice, the connoisseur engages in the super-conscious act of receiving and appreciating every single aspect of the performance. He is therefore to be considered superior to the performing artiste. It is the innate poetic sensibility of the connoisseur which enables him to understand the relevance of the *ekalochana* (expression of two different emotions in two eyes which is made to appear simultaneous) in Kathakali, where two contradictory *rasas* are expressed with each eye, alternately and continually. The artiste, with conscious movements and regular practice, makes such an action possible, but it requires the supreme imagination of the spectator to visualize these eye movements as simultaneous. The Kathakali *ekalochana* is thus meaningful only when its reach extends to the learned connoisseur. Similarly, when the actor performs the *keki* (peacock dance), his limbs, through constant and continuous training, should project the stylized dance of the peacock.

How does a Kathakali actor portray an object while describing it? The unique features or qualities of the object are first described by likening it to similar things. For instance, the heroine's long tresses are likened to the splendour of peacock feathers. But since splendour is an abstract quality which is not a viable or action-oriented description, he describes the peacock whose main attribute is the feather. Kathakali, though, cannot admit static dance postures which only suit pictures. Hence, dynamism should be superimposed on the peacock, and dance being the unique feature of the peacock, he dances in a stylized, symbolic way, the peacock dance. The connoisseur enjoys the virtuosity of the actor in rendering the dance and forgets the heroine's hair, with which it all started. At the end of the dance, his mind travels from the dance to the peacock, from the

peacock to its feathers, then the splendour of the feather, then its parallel in splendour, the splendour of the heroine's hair, and then from the hair to the overall beauty of the heroine. Thus the connoisseur's imagination travels from the heroine's beauty to her hair, to the splendour of her hair, to the splendour of the peacock feather, to the peacock, to the dance, and at last his imagination's return journey reaches the heroine's beauty. What a long circuitous course for his imagination!

How are these unique, intricate aspects portrayed in Kathakali? The description of abstract features and elements are acted out through *angikabhinaya* in the *natyadbarmi* mode. The *angikabhinaya* bases itself on the different percussion instruments used in Kathakali — the *chenda* (drum), *maddalam*, *idakka*, *chenkala* (gong), and *ilattalam* (cymbals). The musical notes and the *ragas* (core melodies) are based on these instruments which add to the symbolic texture of the dramatic presentation. The song of the cuckoo, for instance, is sung not through musical notes but by using percussion instruments. Though this is a seemingly paradoxical point, the discerning ear of the *sabrdayan* hears in it the melodious note of the cuckoo. This would lead to the conclusion that the Kathakali connoisseur is endowed with a unique aesthetic sensibility, and rightly so, since his flair, taste, and receptive skill are much above those of the average spectator.

Kathakali as a commentary

Kathakali is thus not merely a form of entertainment; it is a *sutra*, or aphorism, which has elements of *bhashya* (explanation) and *varttika* (commentary). If the *prekshaka*, as Bharata Muni says, is to perceive beyond the purely stated levels of meaning, it necessarily implies that the *attakkatha* should be brief and aphoristic. A *sutra* is said to be *parimitaksharakalpita*, an axiom where every superfluous word is deleted, and where the existing words contain within themselves endless possibilities of interpretation. In order to explain a *sutra* the aid of *bhashya* is to be sought.

The interpreter of the *sutra* has the liberty to give his own critical view of the existing meaning in the commentary. He can even contradict the meaning while establishing his own. So it is the critic-interpreter who enlarges the scope of the *sutra*.

Since the *attakkatha* has already been likened to the *sutra*, it follows that the Kathakali actor is its *bhashyakara*, or commentator, since it is his performance that determines the value of the *attakkatha*. The *attom* is a commentary which is made appreciable through the portrayal of emotions, actions, and the necessary embellishments. At a higher level, *attom* can also be seen as a *varttika*. *Varttika* has been explained thus: To think of the said, the unsaid, and the badly said, and to add what has been left out by the *sutrakara*, or writer, thus giving completeness, is the science of *varttika*.

Today, the true *sabrdayan* as far as Kathakali is concerned, is a rare entity. The few who exist prefer to refrain from exercising any critical judgement.





Textual Sources For Performances

K. Ayyappa Paniker

Attom (dance) or Kathakali is the term used in Malayalam to refer to the performance, while the verbal text is known as the *attakkatha* (literally, dance story). The latter consists of a narrative rendered in the form of a dance-drama: the narrative frame is usually in quatrains based on Sanskrit metre. The convention is that these narrative quatrains, or *slokas*, are in Sanskrit, though some well-known writers have also written them in pure Malayalam. The “spoken” passages called *padams*, either in monologue or dialogue form, are lyrics set to dance and music. They employ either pure Malayalam or a mix of Malayalam and Sanskrit known to scholars as Manipravala—quite literally, coral and pearl. Occasionally, the narrative link is provided by a long stanza called *dandaka*. Thus the structure of an *attakkatha*, on which the Kathakali performance is closely based, is generally in the following sequence: invocation, introductory quatrain (fixing the dramatic context in the narrative frame), dialogue *padam* (set to *raga*, a core melody, and *tala*, rhythm), narrative quatrain, dialogue... and so on with a closing quatrain.

The verbal text is recited by the two singers who stand behind the actors, and their textual narration is punctuated by pure dance sequences between couplets in the dialogue or monologue passages and by improvisational acting called *ilakiyattom*. The pure recitation with the performance on the stage is known as *cholliyattom*. The literary part follows the conventions common to Manipravala poetry in general. The emphasis is mostly on *natyadbarmi* (stylized acting) aspects rather than on *lokadbarmi* (imitative acting) features. The rendering of the meaning of the recited passages both at the level of the word (*padartha abhinaya*) and at the level of the sentence (*vakyartha abhinaya*) is not confined to the use of *mudras* (hand gestures) for each word or concept, but is extensively devoted to the exploration of the sub-text, or *dhvanipadta*. Thus, the text should be seen only as the skeletal base for evocative improvisation which diligently seeks to fill in the gaps in it by rendering passages taken from other texts. The entire mythology of Indian literature is open to the interpretation of the actor. The dramatization is therefore a combination of the written text (used for *cholliyattom*) with the improvisational text (used for *ilakiyattom*). Only the *attaprakaram*, or performance manual, gives the complete text of a Kathakali play.

The *attakkatha* represents the uninterpreted source text, its bare outline. Knowing the story or even the plot of a play is only the beginning of Kathakali appreciation. It is a prerequisite, but by itself is not enough for a full understanding of the performance. This is how an *attakkatha* differs from a play in the Western sense of the term. The *touryatrikam* consisting of *gita* (song), *vadya* (instrumental music), and *nrtta* (dance), constitutes the orchestration and choreography helping to provide the full performance text. Hence, in judging the merits or demerits of an *attakkatha*, the written text is not the sole criterion; the *attakkatha* should not be evaluated merely as a literary text. Some plays may not have a rich verbal text, but their performance potential too should be taken into account in any total evaluation. If an *attakkatha* provides scope for imaginative elaboration in a performance, it has to be rated high, even if there is little surface polish as literature. An *attakkatha*, unlike pure poetry (*kavya*), is visual, auditive, and contemplative (*drsya-sravya-manana*) poetry. A play by Kottarakkara Tampuran may not have much poetic quality, the verbal text

< A ferocious character, *chuvanna taadi*, portraying a lion.

may look threadbare, unlike the ornate tapestry of a play by Kottayam Tampuran or Unnayi Varrier. Yet, it could be good enough for a stage performance. However, the best *attakkathas* are those that have excellence as *sravya-kavya*, *drsyā-kavya*, and *manana-kavya*.¹

From its inception in the seventeenth century (the sixteenth century, according to some scholars), the *attakkatha* as a literary genre has been patronized by a large number of devoted Malayalam writers. Kottarakkara Tampuran, who is generally accepted as the originator of Ramanattom, wrote a sequence of eight plays based on the *Ramayana* story, with the eight-part sequence of Krishnanattom perhaps serving as his model. As the earliest *attakkathas* that came to be written, they have a special historical importance over and above their literary qualities, and stand at the fountainhead of nearly five hundred *attakkathas* of varying quality. Some have not been printed, others have been lost, quite a few have been printed and are still available, and just some of these are used for performances. They continue to be written even today. A few experimental plays have been written using stories outside Indian mythology. Only about fifty plays have held the stage with recognizable persistence—the works of twenty major playwrights who have left their indelible stamp on the Kathakali stage as well as on *attakkatha* literature.

The eight *Ramayana* plays by Kottarakkara Tampuran are: *Putrakameshti*, *Sitaswayamvaram*, *Vicchinabbishekam*, *Kharavadbom*, *Balivadbom*, *Thoranayuddhom*, *Setubandhanam*, and *Yuddhom*. These are written in a style bereft of poetic merit, but their total design is remarkable. Not all of them have been equally successful on the stage. *Sitaswayamvaram*, *Balivadbom*, and *Thoranayuddhom* are frequently performed. The recent attempt to revive the performance of *Vicchinabbishekam* in ten parts, by Margi, Tiruvananthapuram, has proved that despite the unpromising literary quality of the *attakkatha* its performance potential is considerable. This is in contrast to the attempts to stage Kathakali plays based on the works of Goethe and Shakespeare. Kottarakkara Tampuran, it is true, does not deliver the rich literary cadences of some of his successors such as Kottayam Tampuran and Unnayi Varrier, but his pioneering quality in design and structure cannot be ignored and later writers of *attakkathas* have learnt a lot from him. In concentrating on *rasa* (a form of expression) and *bhava* (impression), in providing for spectacle, and in giving scope for *ilakiyattom*, Kottarakkara Tampuran has rendered invaluable service.

Kottayam Tampuran is a poet of great excellence, but what merits special mention is that he brought poetic talents to impeccable perfection in four major works, all of which have been favourites ever since they were written in the eighteenth century. They are considered the high watermark of *attakkatha* literature. The four plays are: *Bakavadbom*, *Kalyanasougandhikam*, *Kirmiravadbom*, and *Nivatakavacha Kalakeyavadbom*. Their narrative links, and dialogue and monologue passages are in literary Malayalam and offer ample indication of the writer's imaginative power. His mastery of language is perfectly matched by his understanding of human behaviour. All four plays are based on episodes from the *Mahabharata*. In *Bakavadbom* and *Kalyanasougandhikam* the focus of attention is Bhima, in *Kirmiravadbom* it is Yudhishtira (Dharmaputra) and in *Nivatakavacha Kalakeyavadbom* it is Arjuna. All

manner of rhyme, assonance, and alliteration abound in his compositions and many of their passages have proved excellent tests for the histrionic skills of singers and actors. The quatrains in the Kottarakkara plays are written in Malayalam; those in the Kottayam plays are in high-flown Sanskrit. The dialogue passages are in Manipravala. Kottayam Tampuran is believed to have thus set the pattern emulated by later writers of *attakkathas*. The *abhinaya sangita* (music for dramatic enactment) of his *padams* is of the highest order. There is also immense scope for the imaginative interpretation of the hidden meanings of these utterances. The synchronization of the verse structure in his plays and the dance steps used by performers in the roles created by him are so remarkable that the knowledgeable spectator is spellbound.

Next only to him in mastery of design and structure, but even greater in dramatizing the human predicament is Unnayi Varrier, whose play *Nalacharitam*, in four parts over four days, ranks as an all-time great among *attakkathas*. It is by far the most popular as well as the most scholarly of the Kathakali plays. In the portrayal of characters, selection of dramatic episodes of the story, variation of human emotions, and exploitation of subtle shades of the various dominant *rasas*, Unnayi Varrier has no rival. The ups and downs in the fortunes of Nala and Damayanti are so powerfully conveyed that the actors get ample opportunity to render a wide gamut of feelings. The presentation of *srngara rasa* (amour)—both *sambhoga* (love in union) and *vipralambha* (love in separation)—is extremely graceful and controlled. In the masterly fusion of sound and meaning, Unnayi Varrier is comparable to Kalidasa. The role of the *hamsa*, or swan, is conceived and presented with immense subtlety and psychological understanding. The poetic merges perfectly with the dramatic, the *vachika*, or vocal, element is in excellent harmony with the *angika*, or bodily, element. As pure literature also, *Nalacharitam* can hold its own against the best literary works in any language.

Kartika Tirunal Rama Varma, Maharaja of Travancore, was not only a great patron of writers and artistes, but himself a sound scholar (as evidenced by his Sanskrit classic *Balaramabharatam*), and a sensitive writer of *attakkathas*. His contribution to the literature of Kathakali consists of seven plays: *Rajasuyam*, *Narakasuravadhom*, *Subhadraharanam*, *Gandharva Vijayam*, *Panchaliswayamvaram*, *Kalyanasougandhikam*, and *Bakavadhom*. The last two are considered inferior in quality to the plays of the same titles by Kottayam Tampuran. An expert in *Natyasastra*, he allowed himself to be greatly influenced by Kottayam Tampuran, especially in these plays. In his use of simple Malayalam for the narrative quatrains in the texts, he appears closer to Kottarakkara Tampuran. His *Rajasuyam* and *Narakasuravadhom*, particularly, are popular items with Kathakali audiences.

Aswati Tirunal Rama Varma, the nephew of Kartika Tirunal, was a poet of immense gifts. The four *attakkathas* he wrote are *Rugminiswayamvaram*, *Pootanamoksham*, *Ambarishacharitam*, and *Paundrakavadhom*. His *padams* are marked by a superior lyrical quality and his *slokas* graced with memorable imagery. *Rugminiswayamvaram*, *Pootanamoksham*, and *Ambarishacharitam* are popular plays. While Kartika Tirunal drew inspiration from tales from the *Mahabharata*, it was stories from the *Bhagavata* that inspired Aswati Tirunal. The latter's works are more successful on the stage.

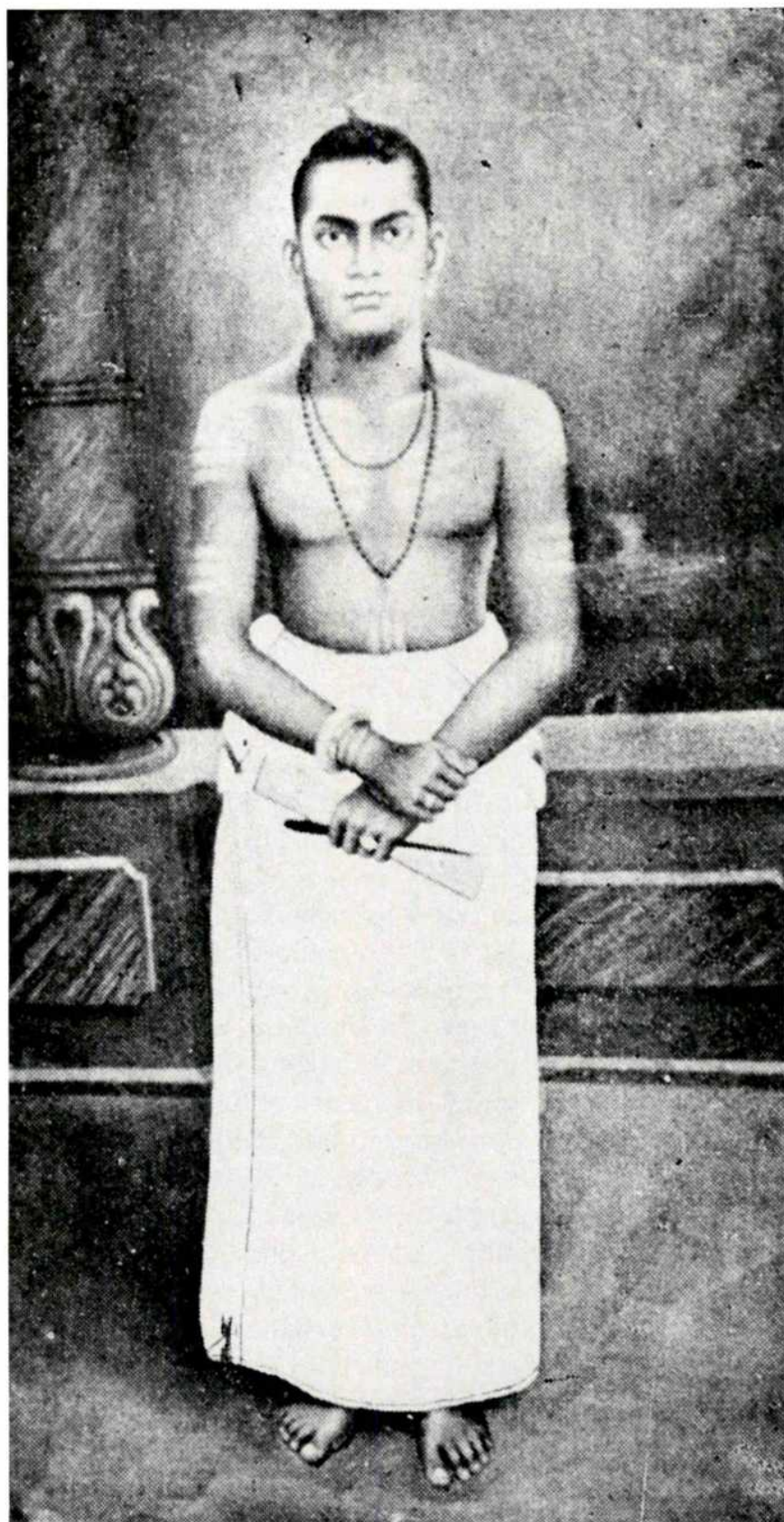
Irayimman Tampi is the last of the great poets who wrote for the Kathakali stage. His three plays, *Kichakavadhom*, *Uttaraswayamvaram*, and *Dakshayagam* are immensely popular. His mastery of music, his great poetic genius, and his knowledge of the Puranas stood him in good stead in writing *attakkathas* which continue to be performed before large audiences. His quatrains and dialogue have a lilt which makes them sound extremely sweet to the ear. It is true that he lacks the psychological depth of Unnayi Varrier and the manly vigour of Kottayam Tampuran, but he is more accessible to the ordinary Kathakali connoisseur.

Among the writers of *attakkathas* who are distinguished by their contribution of plays to the Kathakali canon are Vayaskara Arya Narayanan Moos, whose *Duryodhanavadhom* deals with the central episodes of the *Mahabharata*; Muringoor Sankaran Potti, whose *Kuchelavrttam* recounts the moving tale of Krishna and his classmate Sudama; Pettayil Raman Pillai Asan, whose *Harischandracharitam* in four parts praises the hero's steadfast adherence to truth at the risk of untold personal suffering; Kallekkulangara Raghava Pisharody, whose *Ravanolbhavam* presents the story of Ravana with great understanding and insight; Mantredattu Bhattatirippad, whose *Subhadra-baranam* (*Vadakkan*) continues to be a stage attraction; Kilimanoor Ravi Varma Tampuran, the writer of *Kamsavadhom*, which has true poetic excellence; Balakavi Rama Sastrikal, whose *Banayuddhom* has many passages of literary and dramatic merit; Mandavappalli Ittirarissa Menon, whose *Santanagopalam* and *Rugmangadacharitam* deal with parental affection and devotion to God; Kalloor Nambudirippad, whose *Balivijayam* is full of fine poetic passages and dramatic scenes; Vidwan Kilimanoor Raja Raja Varma Koyi Tampuran, whose *Ravanavijayam* describes Ravana in his moments of triumph; Pannisseri Nanu Pillai, whose *Nizbalkuttu* has tremendous potential for spectacle; Tazhavana Govindan Asan, the author of *Devayanicharitam* which contains the moving episode of Kacha and Devayani; and Palakkattu Amritakavi Sastrikal, whose *Lavanasuravadhom* contains several moments of dramatic power. Among the twentieth-century writers of *attakkathas* performed with varying degrees of success are V. Krishnan Tampi (*Tadakavadhom*) and V. Madhavan Nair (*Karnasapatham*). Kochi Veera Kerala Varma Tampuran wrote the largest number of *attakkathas*—nearly fifty—but none of them seems to be staged today.

What becomes clear from this brief survey of *attakkatha* literature is that the gifts that go into the making of good *attakkathas* are not the same as those that are required for writing good poetry or fiction. Poets like Kerala Varma Valiya Koyi Tampuran and Vallattol Narayana Menon have tried their hand at writing *attakkathas* but failed to make a mark. In the same way, writers with limited or little literary talent like Kottarakkara Tampuran have produced remarkable Kathakali texts. But the best writers of *attakkathas* have had both poetic and dramatic gifts in abundance. Kottayam Tampuran, Unnayi Varrier, Aswati Tirunal Rama Varma, and Irayimman Tampi are the greatest names in *attakkatha* literature. Their works continue to be the mainstay of Kathakali theatre.

Note

1. I am indebted to D. Appukuttan Nair for the concept of the *attakkatha* as *manana-kavya*.



1. Unnayi Varrier, author of *Nalacharitam*, an *attakkatha* of great literary merit and histrionic potential. Photograph: courtesy Unnayi Varrier Kalanilayam.

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<i>Balivadbom</i>
<i>Thoranayuddhom</i>
<i>Setubandhanam</i>
<i>Yuddhom</i> 2. Unnayi Varrier
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<i>Nalacharitam</i>—First Day
<i>Nalacharitam</i>—Second Day
<i>Nalacharitam</i>—Third Day
<i>Nalacharitam</i>—Fourth Day
<i>Subbadraharanam</i> (NS) 3. Kottayam Tampuran
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<i>Bakavadbom</i>
<i>Kalyanasougandhikam</i>
<i>Kirmiravadbom</i>
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(1700-1765)
<i>Kiratam</i> 5. Kartika Tirunal Rama Varma Maharaja
(1724-1798)
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<i>Panchaliswayamvaram</i>
<i>Kalyanasougandhikam</i>
<i>Bakavadbom</i> 6. Kadathanattu Tampuran
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<i>Satamukha Ramayanam</i> (NS) 7. Kallekkulangara Raghava Pisharody
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<i>Ravanolbhavam</i> 8. Putiyikkal Tampan
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<i>Kartaviryavijayam</i>
<i>Ramanukaranam</i> 9. Mantredattu Bhattatirippad
(1730-1795)
<i>Subbadraharanam</i> (Vadakkan) 10. Kilimanoor Ravi Varma Tampuran
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<i>Kamsavadbom</i> | <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 11. Balakavi Rama Sastrikal
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<i>Parijatapaharanam</i>
<i>Mitravindaswayamvaram</i>
<i>Revatiswayamvaram</i>
<i>Bhadraswayamvaram</i>
<i>Rugmivadbom</i>
<i>Lakshanaswayamvaram</i>
<i>Kaliswayamvaram</i>
<i>Dussasanavadbom</i>
<i>Dootavakyam</i>
<i>Sundopasundoppakhyanam</i>
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<i>Sreekrishnavataram</i>
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<i>Sugreevabbisbekam</i>
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<i>Nivatakavachavadbom</i>
<i>Ajamilamoksham</i>
<i>Bhargavavataram</i>
<i>Balaramatirthayatra</i>
<i>Vamanamahatmyam</i>
<i>Tadakavadbom</i>
<i>Sakuntalam</i>
<i>Dakshayagam</i>
<i>Kiratam</i> |
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Ambarishacharitam
Vyasavataram
Yagaraksba
Abalyamoksham
Muchukundamoksham
Panchaliswayamvaram
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Bhadrakali Mahatmyam—Third Day
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<i>Ramayanam</i></p> <p>65. Mooloor Padmanabha Paniker
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<i>Kuchelavrttam</i></p> <p>66. Azhakathu Padmanabha Kurup
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<i>Kumbhanasavadbom</i></p> <p>67. T. C. Achuta Menon
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<i>Bhadrotsavam</i>
<i>Haribaracharitam</i></p> <p>68. Thaikkattu Narayanan Moos
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<i>Krishnanatta Tarjuma</i></p> <p>70. K. C. Narayanan Nambiar
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Tampuran
(1874-1941)
<i>Panchalibaranam</i>
<i>Jaydradbavadbom</i></p> | <p>72. Kaviyoor Venkatachalam Aiyer
(1875-1941)
<i>Moolakasuravijayam</i> or <i>Sitavijayam</i>
<i>Draupadiparinayam</i></p> <p>73. Vallattol Narayana Menon
(1878-1958)
<i>Oushadbabaranam</i>
<i>Jappukattalan</i></p> <p>74. Kuttamattu Kunjukrishna Kurup
(1881-1944)
<i>Balagopalan</i></p> <p>75. K. C. Kuttappa Nambiar
(1882-1939)
<i>Vighnarajodbhavam</i></p> <p>76. Pannisseri Nanu Pillai
(1886-1943)
<i>Nizbalkuttu</i>
<i>Bhadrakalivijayam</i>
<i>Padukapattabhishekam</i>
<i>Sankaravijayam</i></p> <p>77. V. Krishnan Tampi
(1890-1938)
<i>Valleekumaram</i>
<i>Choodamani</i>
<i>Tadakavadbom</i></p> |
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B. Authors and Dates Uncertain

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| <p>1. Anonymous
<i>Bakavadbom</i>
<i>Panchaliswayamvaram</i>
<i>Rajasuyam</i>
<i>Kirmiravadbom</i>
<i>Kiratam</i>
<i>Kalyanasougandhikam</i>
<i>Ajnatavasam</i>
<i>Dharmavijayam</i>
<i>The above are ascribed to</i>
<i>Ramapanivadan by Ulloor</i>
<i>(plays not seen)</i>
<i>Sambaravadbom</i>
<i>Palazhimadbanam</i>
<i>Vadakkan Rugmangadacharitam</i>
<i>Sakuntalam</i>—First Day
<i>Sakuntalam</i>—Second Day
<i>Sakuntalam</i>—Third Day
<i>Sakuntalam</i>—Fourth Day
<i>Sakuntalam</i>—Fifth Day
<i>Sakuntalam</i>—Sixth Day
<i>Rasakreeda</i> (NS)
<i>Banayuddhom</i> (NS)</p> | <p><i>Kamsavadbom</i> (NS)
<i>Rugminiswayamvaram</i> (NS)
<i>Syamantakam</i> (NS)
<i>Dhruvacharitam</i> (NS)
<i>Parijatabaranam</i> (NS)
<i>Vasunrupaticharitam</i> (NS)
<i>Somavaramabatmyam</i> (NS)
<i>Bhasmayogimabatmyam</i> (NS)
<i>Padmakaracharitam</i> (NS)
<i>Narakasuravadbom</i> (NS)
<i>Muchukundamoksham</i> (NS)
<i>Tarakasuravadbom</i> (NS)
<i>Govardhanayagam</i> (NS)
<i>Kailasayatra</i> (NS)
<i>Kaliyamardanam</i> (NS)</p> <p>2. Ambalappuzha Tirumulppad
<i>Parthavijayam</i> (NS)
<i>Syamantakam</i> (NS)</p> <p>3. Ambalappuzha Suppu Annavi
<i>Sitaswayamvaram</i> (NS)</p> <p>4. Ayyoozhi Nambudirippad
<i>Vaisakhavijayam</i> (NS)</p> |
|--|--|

5. Attingal Krishnanasan
Sudarsanavijayam (NS)
6. Idakkottu Velu Vaidyar
Chitruguptacharitam (NS)
7. Ittimattu
Krishnarjunavijayam (NS)
8. Ulloor Parasurama Iyer
Sundopasundayuddhom (NS)
9. Edavattikkattu Nambudiri
Banayuddhom (NS)
Vaisakhapuranam (NS)
10. Eruvayil M. Chakrapani Varrier
Krishnarjunavijayam
Pandavaswamedham
11. Ezhupattu Nanukkutti Menon
Sundariswayamvaram (NS)
12. Kadathanattu Sankara Varrier
Devayanicharitam (NS)
13. Kadinangulam Krishnan Vaidyar
Yamaravana Vadhom (NS)
14. Vidwan Karanattu Kurup
Markandeyacharitam (NS)
15. Kallampally Velu Tampi
Prabhadacharitam (NS)
Harischandracharitam (NS)
16. Kilimanoor Govinda Pillai
Yamaravanavijayam (NS)
17. Keerikkattu Vadakkedattu
Ayyappan Pillai
Ravanavadhom
18. Kuttamattu Narayana Kurup
Hitler Vadhom (NS)
19. Kuttippuram Kovilakattu Puralatiri
Manavarma Ilaya Raja
Indumatiswayamvaram (NS)
Khandavadahanam (NS)
Dilipacharitam (NS)
20. Krishnapurattu Raman Pillai
Satyaswayamvaram (NS)
21. Kochu Kurup Kanakkar
Chuntacharitam (NS)
22. Kottarakkara Ilaya Varma Raja
Lakshanaswayamvaram (NS)
Salvavadhom (NS)
23. Kottarakkara Goda Varma Ilaya
Raja
Parvatiparinayam (NS)
24. Kollangottu Iswara Menon
Tarakasuravadhom (NS)
25. K. N. Gopala Pillai
Bhamaparinayam
26. V. N. Govindan Jyotsyan
Meghanadavijayam
Lalitavijayam
Sriramapattabbishekam (NS)
Sriramaswamedham (NS)
27. Cheerakkad Madhavan Potti
Kuchelavrttam (NS)
Ghoshayatra (NS)
28. Chettikkuzhiyil C. N. Narayana
Menon
Tilottamodbhavam
29. Cheruparambattu Unni Pillai
Bhargavaramavijayam (NS)
30. Tammanattu Potti
Tripuradahanam (NS)
Mitrasabamoksham (NS)
Lakshanaswayamvaram (NS)
31. Tazhamanmadattil Prabhakararu
Tampi
Abhimanyudbhavam
32. Tazhavana Govindan Asan
Devayanicharitam
33. Tiruvattattu Neelakantan Tampi
Prabhadacharitam (NS)
34. Tiruvattattu Vasudevan Potti
Jalandharasuravadhom (NS)
35. Tiruvattattu Sankaranarayanan
Potti
Ghoshayatra (NS)
36. Tiruvalla Kurissi Nambudiri
Gurudakshina (NS)
Janamejayayagam (NS)
37. Damodaran Karta
Prabhadacharitam (NS)
Varabavataram
38. Pandalattu Tampuran
Bhootanathodbhavam (NS)
39. Pandalam P. N. Parameswaran
Nambudiri
Umakeralam
40. Parameswara Jnani Asan
Vikramadityacharitam (NS)
41. Paravoor Kalakkottu K. Narayana
Pillai
Athikaya Vijayam
Mekhanadavijayam
42. Pazhavangadi Toppil Velu Pillai
Mitrasabamoksham (NS)
43. Piniyoor Kurup
Devayanicharitam (NS)
44. Punartam Tirunal Rama
Varma Koyi Tampuran
Sitavijayam (NS)
45. Pullayil Ayyappan Pillai
Vyakbradhwajavijayam (NS)
46. Puliyoor Purushottaman Nambudiri
Ganeshodbhavam
47. Poonthottattu Nambudiri
Rajasuyam (NS)
48. Perurveetil Rama Kurup
Gurudakshina
49. Mannarsala Narayanan Nambiar
Vamanavijayam

50. Marutorvattom C. N. Krishna Pillai
Ajamilamoksham
Gajendramoksham
51. Mattattu Kallampallil
Madattil Govindan Nambudiri
Chandrangadacharitam
Mayilravanavadbom (NS)
52. Mavelikkara Vishnu Potti
Mitrasabamoksham (NS)
Vamanavataaram (NS)
53. Raviswarattu Krishna Varrier
Palazhimathbanam (NS)
54. Raja Raja Varma Koyi Tampuran
Somavaravrtam (NS)
55. P. Ramakrishna Pillai
Syamantakam (NS)
56. Vidwan K. Viswanathan Asari
Mukundavijayam
57. Vishnudasar
Jatirakshasavadbom (NS)
58. Vettikkattu Achutan Pillai
Ekavaliparinayam (NS)
Salvavadbom (NS)
59. Vevalli Subrahmanyam Potti
Tarakasuravadbom (NS)
Parvatiswayamvaram (NS)
60. Vaikkattu Neelakantan Moos
Prabhadacharitam (NS)
61. N. Seshayyankar
Mobiniparinayam (NS)
62. Srinivasaiangar Sastrikal
Dasarathavijayam (NS)
Vasishtavijayam (NS)
Jalandharasuravadbom (NS)
63. Anonymous
Kaliyamardanam (NS)
Pattunni Charitam (NS)
Palazhimadbanam (NS)
Rugmangadacharitam (NS)
Savitricharitam (NS)
Subbhadraharanam (NS)
64. Keerikkattu (Toppil) Gopala Pillai
Satyanarayanam
Tripuracharitam
65. Anonymous
Prabhadacharitam
66. Pandanattil P. R. Gopala Varrier
Dhruvacharitam
67. Kilimanoor Swati Tirunal Goda
Varma
Muchukundamoksham
68. Kolatunatt Udaya Varma
Salvavadbom
Lakshanaswayamvaram
69. Akavoor Manakkal Achan
Tampuran
Devayanicharitam
70. Anonymous
Aswamedham
Kuchelavrttam
Narakasuravadbom
Dootavakyam
Tarakasuravadbom
71. Manalikkaramadam Kesavaru
Vasudevaru
Ghoshayatra
Jalandharasuravadbom
72. Mankada Kovilakattu Cheriya
Tampuran
Bhanukopavijayam
Padmasurodbhavam
Devasenaparinayam
73. Perumangottu Manakkal
Narayanan Nambudiri
Sivaratri Mahatmyam
74. Mulankunnattukavil
Kizhakkemadattil
Narasimham Embrantiri
Tripuradabanam
75. Chalayil Valiavilakattu Bhagavati
Pillai
Kirtimatiswayamvaram
76. Vakkattanattu Edamana M. Krishna
Sarma
Abalyamoksham
77. Changaramkot Krishnan Karta
Kalingavadbom
78. Punnattur Godasankara Elaya
Tampuran
Sivaratrimahatmyam or
Soudasacharitram
79. Anonymous
Portiaswayamvaram
Gopalagbhtakumbham

Note: The *Natyasastra* has been abbreviated to (NS) in this bibliography.
Compiled by D. Appukuttan Nair.



Patrons, Troupes, And Performers

Chitra Panikkar

Over the years, since its inception in the seventeenth century as Ramanattom, Kathakali has lived through several phases of success and decline to reach its present state of artistic stasis.

Ramanattom Kottarakkara Tampuran Vettom Tampuran, 1650-1800

In the mid-seventeenth century, Kerala consisted of a large number of major and minor kingdoms. Prince Kottarakkara Tampuran who hailed from one of these, the Elayidattu Swaroopam, introduced a performing art called Ramanattom. This form was a counterpoint to temple arts like Padayani and Mudi yettu, King Manavedan's Krishnanattom, and the possible rendering in dance of the *Gitagovindam* (Ashtapadiyattom). In those days, Ezhuthachan's *Adhyatma Ramayanam* was recited with ritualistic regularity in every home in Kerala. This might have prompted Kottarakkara Tampuran to compose Ramanattom as a musical dance-drama based on the *Ramayana* theme. He set it in eight parts, on the model of Krishnanattom.

In the ritualistic content of its performance and the Sanskrit content of its literary text, Ramanattom was at variance with Krishnanattom with its style more plain and rustic, vigorous and fast rhythms in the dance steps. The make-up and costume were also comparatively gross. Rama and Lakshmana had their faces painted blue, and demons and monkeys wore face masks. The headgear was made of palm sheath with designs painted on it, while the torso was bare. The actors sang on their own, with the horizontal drum called *maddalam* and the gong called *chenkala* keeping rhythm.

Repertoire

The Ramanattom phase of Kathakali comprised eight plays—*Putrakameshti*, *Sitaswayamvaram*, *Vicchinabbishekam*, *Kharavadhom*, *Balivadhom*, *Thoranyuddhom*, *Setubandhanam*, and *Yuddhom*.

Kaliyogams

Ramanattom spread to other parts of Kerala over a period of three decades. During this time, local performing troupes called *kaliyogams* were established in various places. When it came to Vettom in north Kerala, the Tampuran there effected certain improvements. The blue colour for the faces of Rama and Lakshmana was substituted with emerald green, and gilded headgear was provided. The masks used for monkeys and demons were put aside and instead designs were painted on the face. Beards, costumes for the body, and the special skirts were introduced. The actors were divested of the duty of singing and communicated solely through gestures. Two people were exclusively employed for singing, and the *chenda*, a drum, and cymbals called *ilattalam* were now employed as further accompaniments to the *maddalam* and the gong.

Performers

Drawn from the Nair military class, performers were trained in the gymnasium called *kalari*. However, three names from Vettom Tampuran's troupe have come to stay—Komu Menon, Sankaran Nair, and Bali Otikkan.

< Bali, the monkey-king — a *chuvanna taadi* character.



1. Kartika Tirunal Maharaja, the great royal patron of Travancore, was the Kathakali playwright who wrote the classic treatise *Balaramabharatam*.

Govinda Deekshitar, Kottayam Tampuran, Kalladikkodan, 1700-1750

Another prince, Kottayam Tampuran from north Kerala, meanwhile, wanted to extend the Ramanattom style to stage his four *Mahabharata*-based plays—*Bakavadbom*, *Kalyanasougandhikam*, *Kirmiravadbom*, and *Nivatakavacha Kalakeyavadbom*. With advice from his preceptor, Govinda Deekshitar, and guidance from Vellattu Chattunni Paniker, a Ramanattom performer, Kottayam Tampuran recomposed Ramanattom. He wanted to evolve a style which could accommodate heroic characters like the Pandava brothers, and even anti-heroes with human traits. The emphasis naturally shifted to the expression of human emotions. Consequently, emotive histrionics known as *rasabhinaya* gained prominence and the face assumed importance as the field of expressions.

In order to accentuate the potential for expression, the face was given a white border called *chutti*. This helped to confine and highlight the subtle movements of the features and muscles of the face. Similarly, to invite attention to the focal points of expression on the face—the eyes and lips—they were made bright red in contrast with the dark green of the face. The tempo of action in the performance was slowed down and the action itself made more subtle and stylized. A rigid pattern was established with regard to the various items in the performance. A definite sequence was fixed in the following order—at first the *todayam*, an invocatory dance with a musical base employing all the rhythmic patterns set by the *maddalam* and cymbals, followed by the *purappad*, an elaborate stylized dance serving as a prelude, and then the *manjutarā* sequence from *Gitagovindam* sung to the accompaniment of instruments such as the *chenda*, *maddalam*, *ilattalam*, and *chenkala*. With this, Kathakali had completed the early phase of its development.

Repertoire

The Kalladikkodan period had for its share the famous eight Ramanattom plays, and the four *Mahabharata* plays which were newly introduced by Kottayam Tampuran.

Kaliyogams

The *kaliyogams* of the period were Kottayam (north), Kadattanad, Pulappatta, Perumpadappu, Palakkad, Vadakkumkoor, Chempakassery, and Thekkumkoor.

Performers

Vellattu Chattunni Paniker and his disciple Naanu Menon were the two well-known performers. Apart from them, very little is known of the performers of this period.

Kaplingadan Nambudiri, Kartika Tirunal Maharaja, Veera Kerala Varma, 1750-1800

Kathakali came of age during this period because of the royal patronage it received from Kartika Tirunal of Travancore and Veera Kerala Varma of Cochin. The dance-form was further enriched by the innovations of the great preceptor,

performer, and reformer Kaplingadan Nambudiri. The art was steadily gaining in subtlety and imaginative stylization, with expressive histrionics and a slow, elegant execution marking the features of the new style. The introduction of *rajasic*, or dynamic, characters such as Ravana in *Ravanolbhavam* and *Balivijayam*, Narakasura in *Narakasuravadbom*, Jarasanda in *Rajasuyam*, and Sisupala in *Rugminiswayamvaram* added a new dimension to the art. These anti-heroes shot into prominence, brushing aside the gentle Pandava heroes of the Kottayam plays and the wild monkey-like characters in Ramanattom. Amorous scenes and scenes of valour became more effective in the hands of these *rajasic* characters. Several special items like Ravana's *Tapassattom* (penance enactment), the *keki* (peacock dance), *Surpanakbankom* (multiple role dramatics), and descriptive accounts of the heavens, forests, and gardens were introduced.

Repertoire

Besides Ramanattom and the Kottayam plays of the previous phase, *Narakasuravadbom* and *Rajasuyam* by Kartika Tirunal, *Rugminiswayamvaram*, *Pootanamoksham*, *Ambarishacharitam*, and *Paundrakavadbom* by Aswati Tirunal, *Ravanolbhavam*, *Balivijayam*, *Kiratam*, *Kamsavadbom*, *Banayuddhom*, *Kartaviryarjunavijayam*, *Rugmangadacharitam*, and *Santanagopalam* were in vogue during this period.

Kaliyogams

A few significant *kaliyogams* were the palace *kaliyogam* at Tiruvananthapuram, the palace *kaliyogam* at Tripoonithura, and those at Mattoor, Kaplingadan, Kadattanad Vilakam, Kavungal, and Mankada.

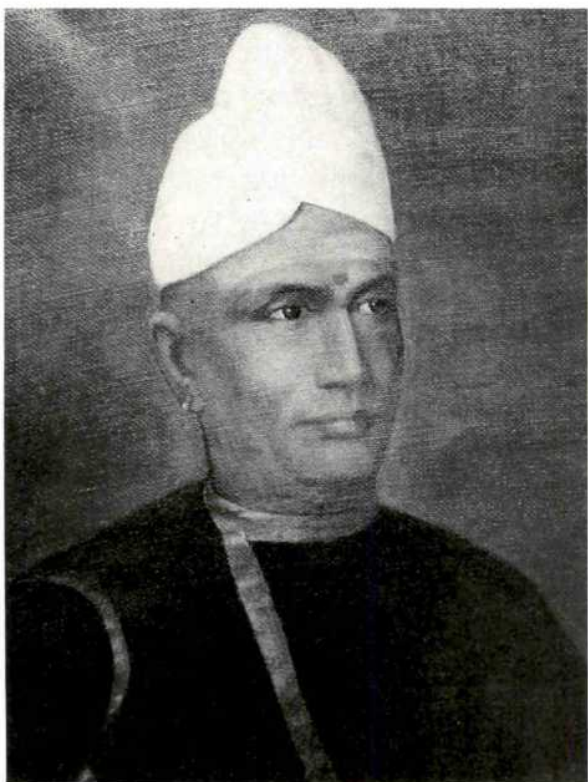
Performers

Some exceptional performers of the time were Unniri Paniker, Ittiri Paniker, and Krishna Paniker. Little is known about others.

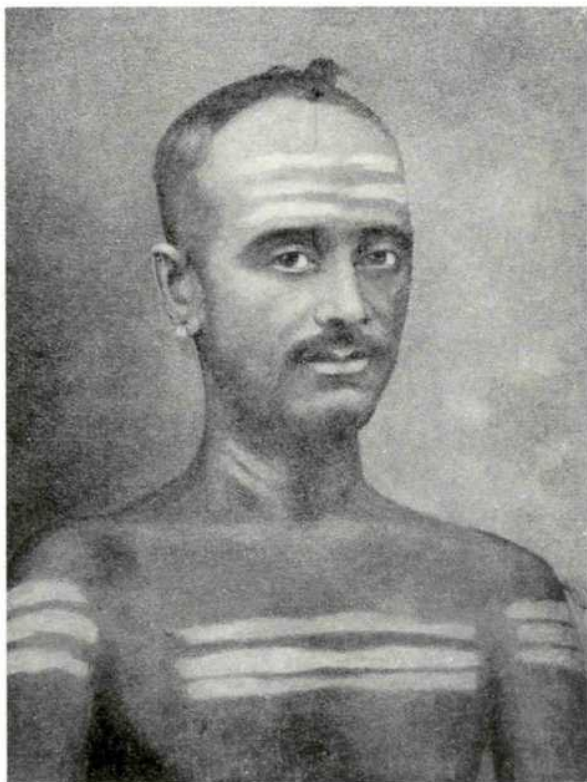
Utram Tirunal, Kalluvazhi Kidangoor, Takazhi, Karipuzha styles, 1830-1860

Kaplingadan Nambudiri died in 1789 and Kartika Tirunal Maharaja died in 1798. Veera Kerala Varma lived until 1828 but after he became the Maharaja of Cochin in 1810, he could not devote adequate attention to Kathakali. Consequently, during the first two decades of the nineteenth century, Kathakali was dormant, but during the reign of Utram Tirunal, it was ushered into its most glorious phase. Utram Tirunal, of the Travancore royal family, showered lavish patronage on Kathakali artistes and *kaliyogams*. With themes like *Nalacharitam* offering great scope for *rasabhinaya*, the poetics of Kathakali acquired three-dimensional proportions. Four distinctive styles evolved during this period.

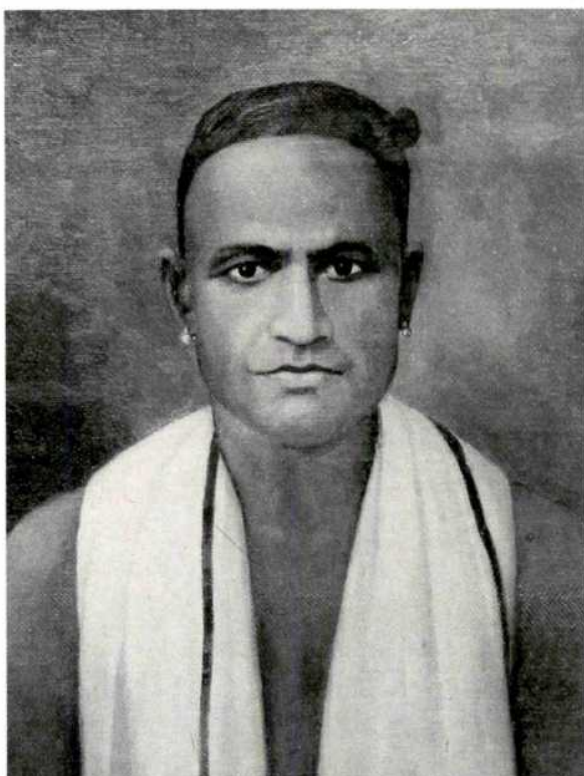
The new "Kalluvazhi style" was introduced in 1850 under the patronage of the Olappamanna Mana. This synthesis of the Kalladikkodan and the Kaplingadan styles was created by Unniri Paniker and later propagated by Ittirarissa Menon. The Kerala Kalamandalam under Pattikkantodi Ramunni Menon gave currency to this style in Kerala.



2. Eachara Pillai Vicharippukar was a performer whose natural majesty and stage presence earned him a very high position in the royal court of Travancore.



3. Kesava Kurup, considered a versatile performer, handled almost any role with consummate ease and artistry.



4. Kochu Neelakanta Pillai, belonging to the Toppil and palace troupes of Travancore, was an artiste famous for his enactment of *paccha* and *katti* roles.

However, in south Kerala, the Kaplingadan style with a few elements of Ramanattom and Kalladikkodan formed the basis of the Kathakali style. It was strongly influenced by Kudiyattom, then popular in north and central Travancore. Through his association with the Cheriya Parisha Chakiyars of Kidangoor, Nalanunni evolved the Kidangoor style.

The Takazhi and Karipuzha styles also showed a strong influence of Kudiyattom, owing to their association with the Valiya Parisha Chakyars of Ambalapuzha, the Potiyil Chakyars of Kottayam, and the Eroor Chakyars of Kayamkulam. These Chakyars performed Kudiyattom regularly in the temples of central and north Travancore. Around the same time, Utram Tirunal exposed Eachara Pillai Vicharippukar to Kudiyattom with seven consecutive performances of *Asokavadikankom* in Tiruvananthapuram. The Kadattanad style of Kathakali in north Kerala was dominated by the Kaplingadan system.

The Kalluvazhi style was noted for its technical virtuosity and the Kottayam plays were its forte. Kathakali in Travancore was noted for its *rasabhinaya* (probably the influence of Kudiyattom), and had for its scoring performances *Nalacharitham*, *Rugmangadacharitham*, and Tampi's plays. The quality of performances thus reached its zenith during this period. A finely controlled tempo combined with remarkable flights of imagination on the descriptive front, together with subtle modes of *rasabhinaya* and a high degree of stylization, raised Kathakali to the level of divine aesthetics. Each play, as a result, took four to five full nights to be performed.

Repertoire

Nalacharitham (performed over four days), *Kichakavadbom*, *Uttaraswayamvaram*, *Dakshayagam*, and *Ravanavijayam* were the new additions. These are still considered the best Kathakali plays.

Kaliyogams

Utram Tirunal had two palace troupes—a major troupe and a minor one. The king himself used to perform on the stage. The members of the *kaliyogam* enjoyed a high status during Utram Tirunal's reign. His favourite performer, Eachara Pillai Vicharippukar, lived in royal style and travelled in a palanquin with bodyguards. The palace troupe included luminaries like Nalanunni, Eachara Pillai Vicharippukar, Kandiyoor Pappu Pillai, Kochayyappa Paniker, and Itichenna Paniker. Another famous *kaliyogam* was Toppil of central Travancore (1835), and yet another was Olappamanna of south Malabar (1843). The Toppil *kaliyogam* had stalwarts such as Takazhi Velu Pillai who followed the Takazhi style and Kandiyoor Pappu Pillai, a practitioner of the Karipuzha style. The Toppil *kaliyogam* and the Tiruvananthapuram palace troupe would vie with each other for supremacy. In due course, an integrated style developed at Toppil, which eventually became the style of Travancore Kathakali. The Olappamanna *kaliyogam* continued in the Kalluvazhi tradition, with Ittirarissa Menon as its preceptor. Kathakali was instituted as an offering at the Tiruvalla Sree Vallabha Temple during this era.

Performers

This period belonged to a rare species of artistes endowed with a brilliant

creativity that translated itself into poetic genius. This supreme ability to dally with ideas paved the way for the golden age of Kathakali. The pseudonym Nalanunni for Ramanunni reflects the performer's superb portrayal of Nala. In a poem, Utram Tirunal eulogized the astonishing charm of the extremely slow tempo employed by Nalanunni in amorous scenes. There are several legends about his versatility. He also cut a fresh path in the Kidangoor style. The natural majesty and ravishing stage presence of Eachara Pillai earned him a very high position in the royal court.

Kandiyoor Pappu Pillai, another performer of extraordinary talent, evolved the Karipuzha style, while Takazhi Velu Pillai laid the foundation for the Takazhi style. Kesava Kurup was another performer who could handle any role with ease and consummate artistry. While Kunchu Kartavu was a genius in the field, the charming and thorough performer Ittirarissa Menon, piloted the Kalluvazhi style. Kochayyappa Paniker was great in *katti* and *kari* roles while Itichenna Paniker excelled in *paccha*. The period indeed saw a galaxy of star performers.

Decline of royal patronage, rise in the number of patrons, *kaliyogams*, and performers, subsequent fall in standards, 1860-1930

This phase may be split into two periods, 1860-1900 and 1900-1930. The first saw a decline of the art-form and the second initiated a complete breakdown. Utram Tirunal Maharaja passed away in 1861. His successor Ayilyam Tirunal was more interested in Carnatic music and dances by women. His successor Visakhom Tirunal, who ruled for a short period, considered Western civilization superior to Indian. His successors, in turn, Sree Moolam Tirunal and Sree Chitra Tirunal, were indifferent to Kathakali but continued with it because they did not want to discontinue a tradition. Ayilyam Tirunal disbanded the palace *kaliyogam* and restricted its function to staging twenty performances a year in the Padmanabhaswami Temple at Tiruvananthapuram.

Meanwhile, encouraged by the royal patronage and enhanced prestige enjoyed by Kathakali performers like Eachara Pillai, many youngsters had taken to Kathakali. Several aristocratic Nambudiri and Nair families set up their own *kaliyogams*. This meant a large number of *kaliyogams* and artistes, which naturally led to the dilution of the art. Moreover, towards 1900, the Nambudiri and Nair families started facing internal problems posed by a rebellious younger generation, which ultimately resulted in a lack of attention paid to Kathakali and diminished enthusiasm on the part of artistes. The rigours of training gradually gave way to ease and relaxation. The six-month-long oil massage during the months of the south-west and north-east monsoons from June to November, got reduced to three months. Plays which took four nights to perform were abridged and executed within one night. This led to the further deterioration of quality; slow tempo had lost its value. By 1920 there was a total collapse of Nambudiri and Nair families, brought about by fresh legislation. This disrupted the functioning of the *kaliyogams* and drove the Kathakali artiste to the streets where, knowing no other vocation, he was reduced to sheer penury.

Repertoire (1860-1900)

More than fifty *attakkathas* (literary texts for Kathakali) were written during this period by great poets of the time, but only four plays gained acceptance. This was also a pointer to the fact that a work of high literary value need not necessarily be suitable for a Kathakali performance. Such texts may even deprive the Kathakali performer of the opportunity to use his imagination. An *attakkatha* with a potential for aesthetic development in the visual poetic medium therefore suits Kathakali best. The notable plays of this period were *Kuchelavrttam*, *Duryodhanavadhom*, *Vadakkan Rajasuyam*, and *Devayanicharitam*.

Kaliyogams

Following the golden period of Utram Tirunal, nearly twenty-five *kaliyogams*—the largest number ever—came into being. They often functioned sporadically and altogether existed for only a short period. Some of these were Marattu Mana (1857-1867), Kombi Achan (1863-1898), Mankada (1868-1876), Arattupuzha (1871-1874), Manniledattu (1875-1892), Mappad Mana (1875-1881; 1883-1885; 1895-1900), Kutiravattom (1881-1882), Neeleswaram (1885-1900), Turutti (1885-1915), Pulloor Mana (1888-1892), Kadattanad (1890-1915), Kochi Kovilakam (1891-1916), Edappalli (1892-1901), Mavilayi (1893-1894), Kulattoor (1894), Edamana (1894-1905), Tazhakkad (1894-1906), Parayannoor Mana (1896-1897), Poomulli Mana (1896-1897), Kodott Mana (1896-1901), Turayil (1897-1907), Mattoor, and Kavungal (periods unknown). The Toppil *kaliyogam* lasting nearly ninety years and Olappamanna *kaliyogam* lasting sixty years, continued to function.

Performers

Some noted performers of the period were Kavungal Kunjukrishna Paniker, Ampattu Sankara Menon, Koranattu Achuta Menon, Kootil Kunjan Menon, Echi Padmanabha Paniker, Kareethra Rama Paniker, Ambalapuzha Kunjukrishna Paniker, Kochu Neelakanta Pillai, Mattoor Kunju Pillai Paniker, Champakkulam Sanku Pillai, Rama Varman Tirumulpad, Kumaranchira Kunchu Pillai, Kavungal Sankara Paniker, Takazhi Kesava Paniker, Valia Neelakanta Pillai, Karipuzha Velu Pillai, and Kochu Pillai Paniker. Many of them were attached to *kaliyogams* which had good facilities. However, the succeeding period saw the decline and eventual fall of patrons and *kaliyogams*.

Repertoire (1900-1930)

No worthy additions were made to the existing repertoire in these three decades; the *attakkathas* written during this period lacked quality.

Kaliyogams

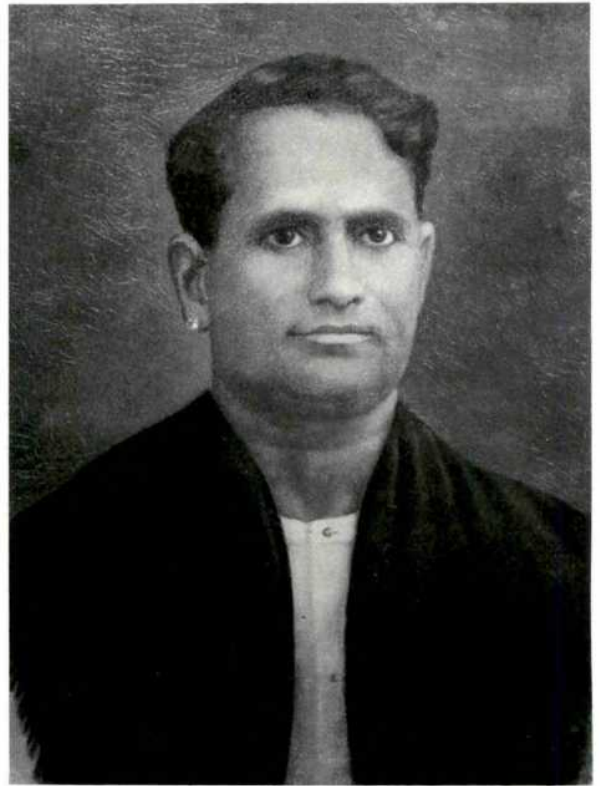
Kaliyogams established at the time were of a transient nature, lasting for a short while. Some of them were Olappamanna (until 1905), Manjeri (1905-1914), Chennas (1909-1914), Nedumpalli (1909-1914), Eliyangadu (1913), Kavalappara (1913-1915), Manakulam (1915-1927), Punnattoor (1916-1921), Elippikkal (1919-1931), Kulattoor (1920-1923), Toppil until 1923, Vaarankode (1928-1929), Vachali Kittan (1931-1932), and Vengayil (1935-1941).



5. Mattoor Kunju Pillai Paniker, a scholar and performer known for his *paccha* roles, especially that of Nala.



6. Pattikkantodi Ramunni Menon, reputedly one of the finer teachers of Kathakali, left behind a rich legacy with students such as Kalamandalam Krishnan Nair and Ramankutty Nair.



7. The gifted Kunchu Kurup excelled in *rasabhinaya* — performing with a rare aesthetic insight into the roles he essayed.

Performers

Performers of the period included Pattikkantodi Ramunni Menon, Koppan Nair, Tottam Sankaran Nambudiri, Chandu Paniker, Kunchu Kurup, Ambu Paniker, Karunakara Menon, Chengannoor Raman Pillai, Keerikkadu Velu Pillai, Kurichi Kunjan Paniker, Kadampoor Gopalan Nair, Tekkinkatil Ramunni Nair, Kavalappara Narayanan Nair, Champakkulam Paramu Pillai, and Turavoor Madhavan Pillai. These artistes were attached to various *kaliyogams* from time to time. Among the performers, only Pattikkantodi Ramunni Menon devoted himself to the arduous training of a few select Kathakali artistes. Kalamandalam Krishnan Nair, Vazhenkada Kunchu Nair, Keezhpadam Kumaran Nair, Kavungal Sankarankutty Paniker, Kadattanad Govindan Nair, Kalamandalam Ramankutty Nair, Padmanabhan Nair, and Kottakkal Krishnankutty Nair were his disciples. No other Kathakali artiste can claim such a rich legacy.

By 1923, Kathakali *yogams*, performers, and performances were in distress. The practice of patronage had come to a close and the Kerala élite had taken to Western ways. Kathakali was dubbed a “dumb-show”, and the art was badly in need of money, patronage, and revival. Fortunately, at this stage, the legendary poet Vallattol stepped in, and prepared to revive the art-form at any cost. In order to re-establish Kathakali, he raised money and founded the Kerala Kalamandalam.

Vallattol Narayana Menon, Kerala Kalamandalam, Margi, and similar institutes, 1930 to the present

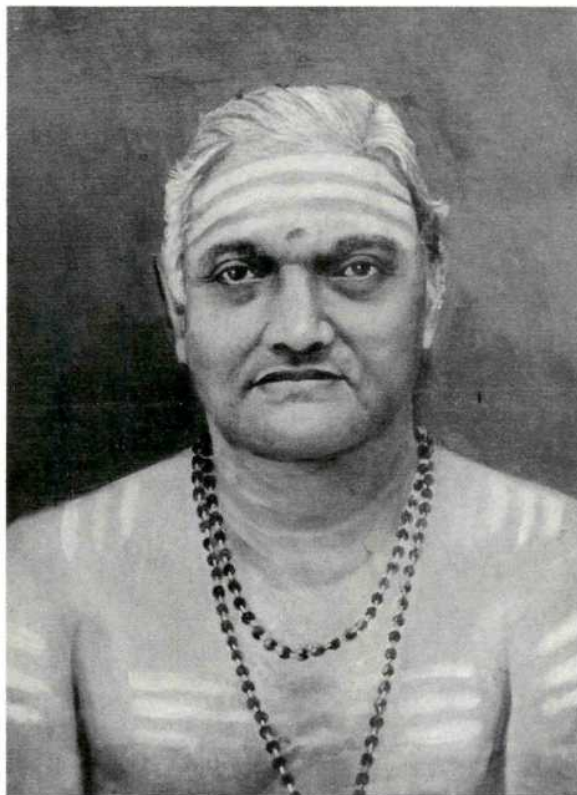
To retrieve Kathakali, Vallattol along with Mukunda Raja and others set up the Kerala Kalamandalam institution in 1930. It was permanently established in 1937 at Cheruturutti, where it continues to function.

Vallattol had to face heavy odds by way of frequent financial problems and interruptions while working on this project. He engaged stalwarts like Pattikkantodi Ramunni Menon, Kunchu Kurup, and Kavalappara Narayanan Nair as actors, Samikutty Bhagavatar and Venkatakrishna Bhagavatar as singers, Moottamana Nambudiri for the *chenda*, and Venkicchan and Madhava Varrier for the *maddalam*. Though the Kalamandalam is said to follow the Gurukulam system, it has not truly adhered to the Gurukulam style except for the fact that teachers and pupils live on the same campus. Like the Western system of education, it has a definite duration and syllabus-bound courses with annual examinations and the issue of certificates. It seems to have been forgotten that an education culminating in acquiring a certificate does not create real artistes.

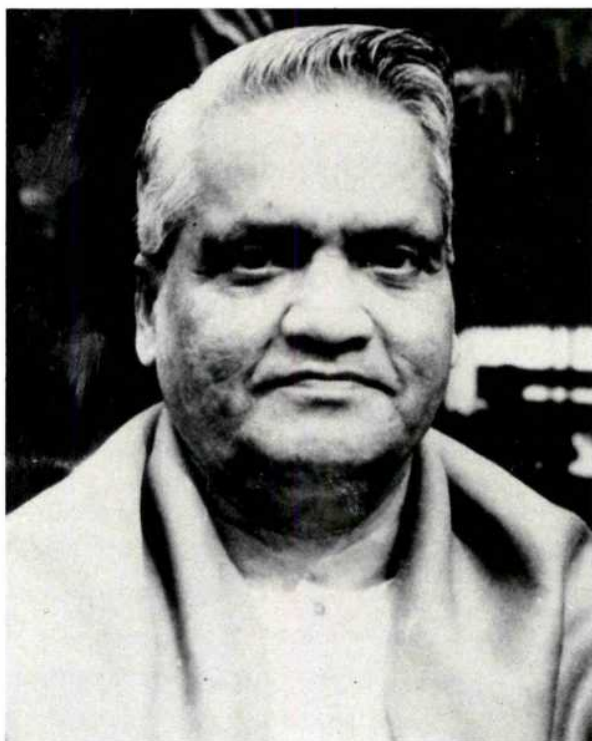
Though there were several teachers at Kalamandalam, it was Pattikkantodi Ramunni Menon who reigned supreme by virtue of his devotion to duty and remarkable capacity for teaching. As a result Kalamandalam adopted his Kalluvazhi style. Pattikkantodi made certain changes, by reducing the number of *kalasams* (pure dance sequences) and accelerating the tempo in the enactment of love scenes, but supplemented the Kalluvazhi style with his scholarship in imaginative acting which he had acquired from the Kodungalloor Tampurans. Vocal support from Venkatakrishna Bhagavatar, with Moottamana



8. Chengannoor Raman Pillai dominated the Kathakali stage in the Travancore area for several decades, with his forte being the portrayal of *katti* roles.



9. Kalamandalam Krishnan Nair is considered the greatest Kathakali performer, with an immaculate stage presence and versatile imagination which afforded him the power to portray wide-ranging roles.



10. The mature, scholarly Vazhenkada Kunchu Nair was an artiste enjoying popularity in central Kerala.

on the *chenda* and Venkicchan on the *maddalam* helped evolve a distinct Kalamandalam style based on the Kalluvazhi system.

Kalamandalam, however, has since found it difficult to maintain its standards of artistic quality due to an overgrown size, affluence, and publicity. Unfortunately, popular governments have politicized the institution and debased it by conferring material benefits to members at the expense of art and aesthetics.

Several other institutes came up during the period of the establishment of Kerala Kalamandalam, imitating its style of operation. Two notable ones are the Unnayi Varrier Kalanilayam, Irinjalakkuda, and P.S.V. Natyasangham, Kottakkal. Several others exist, without having yet made an impact.

Started in 1909 as a musical drama troupe, the P.S.V. Natyasangham introduced itself as a Kathakali troupe in 1939 with Pattikkantodi Ramunni Menon as preceptor. For a while, Guru Kunchu Kurup and Kavalappara Narayanan Nair taught acting, Poomulli Kesavan Nair and later Vasu Nedungadi music, Venkicchan and Manjeri Sankunni Nair the *maddalam*, and Moottamana and Kuttan Marar the *chenda*. The troupe was disbanded in 1944 for a short period but was soon revived with Vazhenkada Kunchu Nair teaching until 1960. During this period, the troupe gained much acclaim. After Kunchu Nair left, Krishnankutti Nair headed it.

At present, the troupe has nearly twenty-five artistes. Financed by a prosperous ayurvedic institute, the Kathakali troupe is well supported. It is noted for introducing new plays such as *Sampurna Ramayanam*, *Viswamitran*, *Kumarasambhavam*, and *Sithaparityagam*, but their popularity has not been significant.

Founded in 1955, the Unnayi Varrier Kalanilayam runs on the same lines as the Kerala Kalamandalam, with a definite duration for courses and annual examinations. Pallippuram Gopalan Nair was the first preceptor with supporting staff to teach music, the *chenda*, the *maddalam*, and make-up. It has the same repertoire as Kerala Kalamandalam.

Margi of Tiruvananthapuram works differently. It functions as a resource institute for Kathakali in the *kaliyogam* style, without offering time-bound, syllabus-confined, examination-oriented training, and grooms those Kathakali performers who have completed their course at the Kerala Kalamandalam with distinction. By means of its performance and training methods, Margi transforms them into artistes, giving them a chance to develop and ignite their imaginative potential, and improve their technical virtuosity and aesthetic erudition. Old plays are re-created elaborately, turning the clock back to Kathakali's days of glory. Thus, to accommodate the poetic imagination, histrionics, and the slow, subtle, and stylized acting, each play takes three to four entire nights for a complete performance and all of them are regularly subjected to critical assessment by a jury of connoisseurs, for whom the performances of Margi are primarily staged.

Repertoire

Several new plays were written during this period, but none of them continues to be performed except *Karnasapatham*, which, though not really conforming to Kathakali standards, can survive because it pleases the masses.

Performers

Based on seniority, the performers since 1930 may be categorized under three heads. One outstanding artiste of this period was the late Kalamandalam Krishnan Nair, another, the late Vazhenkada Kunchu Nair who was scholarly, hard-working, and sincere. Others were Mankulam Vishnu Nambudiri, Pallippuram Gopalan Nair, Kavungal Sankarankutty Paniker, and Vellinezhi Nanu Nair. Present-day luminaries who belong to the same group include Kana Kannan Nair, Keezhpadam Kumaran Nair, Kudamaloor Karunakaran Nair, and Champakkulam Pacchu Pillai.

The second category includes Kavungal Chattunni Paniker, Kalamandalam Ramankutty Nair, Mankompu Sivasankara Pillai, Kalamandalam Padmanabhan Nair, Kottakkal Krishnankutty Nair, the late Harippad Ramakrishna Pillai, Chennittala Chellappan Pillai, Kalamandalam Rajan, Madavoor Vasudevan Nair, Kalamandalam Gopi, Kottakkal Sivaraman, and V. P. Ramkrishnan. While Kalamandalam Ramankutty Nair tops this list, Kalamandalam Gopi and Kottakkal Sivaraman are extremely popular as well.

Thus, starting with the crude form of Ramanattom in the mid-seventeenth century, Kathakali passed through several stages of development, gaining a refinement in the process. It was made more subtle by an increasing degree of stylization, and the introduction of an element of poetry into descriptive acting, besides the addition of a certain finesse to movements of the face while expressing emotion. The art reached its aesthetic zenith in the mid-nineteenth century; then came a slow decline in standards which brought its reputation considerably low in the third decade of the twentieth century.

At present, Kathakali, though much publicized, is in a poor state in terms of its artistic worth, mostly as a consequence of indiscriminate authoritarian attitudes that turn what is primarily a connoisseur's art into an art for the masses.





Major Kathakali Institutes

Kerala Kalamandalam

Olappamanna Subrahmanian Nambudirippad

When, in the beginning of the twentieth century, the Kathakali *kaliyogams* (troupes) which had been supported and maintained by aristocratic households suffered a decline and a cultural renaissance was perceived as imperative in the wake of nationalist movements, the poet Vallattol Narayana Menon and a few of his contemporaries—Manakulam Kunjunni Raja, Nilamboor Valia Raja, and Mukunda Raja felt that the solution lay in



1. Mahakavi Vallattol Narayana Menon, the founder of Kerala Kalamandalam, was one of the foremost Malayalam poets and was responsible for popularizing Kathakali in India and abroad. Photograph: courtesy K. S. Narayanan.

< Hanuman in a meditative pose with *vella taadi* make-up and costume.

establishing an institute for Kathakali. It was in these circumstances that they set up the Kerala Kalamandalam in 1930.

However, money and public response were needed to sustain the institute, so it staged several performances in Kerala, other parts of India, and abroad, to raise finance and evoke interest in the art. The founder-members even went to the extent of organizing a lottery. In spite of all these attempts and Vallattol's charisma, the returns did not justify either the effort contributed towards Kathakali or the worth of the art-form.

Hence, in utter despair, the Kalamandalam was handed over to the Cochin government. Though the institution faced a set-back for some time, it picked up once its running was controlled by a committee headed by Vallattol.

In fact, it was during the period from 1930 to 1941 that the Kalamandalam, permanently established in 1937 at Cheruturutti, had a galaxy of great teachers of tradition like Pattikkantodi Ramunni Menon, Kunchu Kurup, Kavalappara Narayanan Nair, Ambu Paniker, and Koppan Nair. Pattikkantodi was the real backbone of the institute and before he left it in 1943, he established the Kalluvazhi style in which he was trained. He discreetly chose *kalasams* (pure dance sequences) which had their own unique character and could contribute to the expression of emotions, and perfected *cholliyattom* (speech and dance). Strangely enough, out of the five students of this period, Kelu, Sankaran, Sivaraman, and Gopinathan took to dance and only Krishnan who remained, rose to histrionic heights.

The second phase began in 1947, with the induction of earlier Kalamandalam alumni as trainers. Thus Neelakantan Nambeesan (1947—*pattu*, or song), Krishnankutty Poduval (1947—*chenda*, or drum), Govinda Warriar (1947—*chutti*, or make-up), Ramankutty Nair (1948—*vesha*, or costume), Appukkutty Poduval (1948—*maddalam*, also a drum), Padmanabhan Nair (1951—*vesha*), and Acchunni Poduval (1953—*chenda*) joined as permanent teachers. Mampuzha Madhava Paniker (*vesha*), Kumaran Nair (*vesha*), and Kavungal Madhava Paniker (*pattu*) were on the staff for short periods. Earlier, Samikutty Bhagavatar, Venkatakrishna Bhagavatar, and Sivaraman Nair (*pattu*), Guruvayoor Kuttan Marar and Moottamana (*chenda*), and Venkicchan and Madhava Warriar (*maddalam*) had served the teachers' cadre with distinction. Sivaraman Nair and Venkicchan continued for several years.

A curriculum for training was drawn up in 1956, which fixed the duration of training for *vesha* and *pattu* as three years for junior roles, five years for intermediate roles, and eight years for main roles; for the *chenda*, *maddalam*, *tullal* (narrative dance) and dance, two years for intermediate roles and four years for main roles. The then prevalent portions from twenty Kathakali texts were to be taught according to the syllabus.

In 1957, a bureaucratic reformation was introduced on the advice of the then district collector of Trichur, by which Kalamandalam was to function with vacations for Onam, Christmas, and midsummer, with holidays on Saturdays and Sundays, hold annual examinations, and issue certificates signed by a "government official" as in any English school.

Nearly thirty acres of land were purchased in 1959, where over a period of fifteen years several buildings were constructed—an administrative block, detached *kalaris* (training gymnasiums), buildings, hostels, and quarters.

Vallattol, who was the heart and soul of Kalamandalam, passed away in 1958. The government then entrusted the administration to a governing body with a chairman, a vice-chairman, an executive board, and a general body. Since its inception in 1961, its chairpersons have included Kommattil Achuta Menon, Dr K. N. Pisharody, M. K. K. Nayar, D. H. Nambudirippad, K. M. Kannampilly, Olappamanna (for two terms), T. M. B. Nedungadi, and K. V. Kochaniyan.

In 1958, there was a fresh induction of trainers, and the following year saw Vazhenkada Kunchu Nair appointed the head of the institute. In 1963 it was declared the State Akademi of Arts and came under the control of the government. The teachers were designated professors and assistant professors but are still better known as *asans*. The period of training for Kathakali *vesha* and music was reduced to six years and the number of plays to be taught also cut down from twenty to sixteen. During this phase, new entrants on the staff were all students of the previous set comprising Nambeesan, Ramankutty Nair, and others such as Gopi (1958—*vesha*), Gangadharan (1961—*pattu*), and Ramankutty Varrier (1964—*pattu*).

A *tekkan* (southern) *kalari* was established in 1966, with Mankompu Sivasankara Pillai (*vesha*) and Pallom Madhavan (*pattu*). In the same year, Chandra Mannadiar, a senior *chenda* player, was taken in the place of Krishnankutty Poduval. Kunchu Nair was made the principal.

The next phase was the late sixties and seventies, when recruits to the staff of the Kalamandalam were students of the previous set of teachers, Gopi and Gangadharan—Madampi (1969—*pattu*), Vijayan (1971—*vesha*), and Madavoor Vasudevan Nair (1968—*vesha*) in charge of the *tekkan kalari*, who was not a Kalamandalam alumnus. He left in 1977 and Sivasankara Pillai joined in 1979. Vasu Pisharody (1978—*vesha*), Rajasekharan (1979—*vesha*), and Balasubrahmaniam (1979—*vesha*) also joined the teaching staff.

In 1972, Kunchu Nair retired as principal and Neelakantan Nambeesan succeeded him. After his retirement in 1980 Ramankutty Nair was the principal, followed by Padmanabhan Nair in 1985 and Gopi in 1989.

Thus, from five students and three teachers practising Kathakali in the small room of an old residence in 1930 to the present status of a large thirty-acre estate, including an annexure of six acres with a grand administrative complex, a monumental theatre, hostels, several separate *kalaris*, and residential quarters with nearly a hundred and fifty students, sixty teachers, and forty members on the secretarial staff, in addition to foreign students, it has been an onward march for the Kerala Kalamandalam. Indeed, Kathakali has become almost synonymous with it. It has popularized Kathakali even abroad, and established a systematic training in Kathakali with a definite duration, syllabus, annual examinations, and the issue of certificates. Thousands of students have benefited from its training. Its silver, golden, and diamond jubilees were celebrated with great acclaim, besides which the institute has often been visited by dignitaries and seen generous support from all quarters. In spite of the fact that it today witnesses several disturbing tendencies by way of indiscipline, adoption of unsuitable themes for Kathakali, weakness in training, and a general politicization, the institute holds fond memories for those associated with it over a long period.

Margi: An Art Resource Centre

G. S. Warriier

The concepts of *margi* and *desi* styles as applied to arts such as music and dance have been enunciated in India from ancient times. While the *desi* style is bounded by space and time, with consequent limitations in aesthetics, *margi* transcends space and time to provide lasting and boundless rapture. Margi at Tiruvananthapuram, was an institute conceived to comply with the latter.

Though Kathakali is more than three hundred years old, it attained the zenith of its artistic glory nearly a hundred and fifty years ago. Vallattol Narayana Menon, the famous poet who founded the Kerala Kalamandalam, once referred to the great performers of that period, Eachara Pillai Vicharippukar, Nalanunni, Ittirarissa Menon, Kesava Kurup, and others remarking, "Where are those magnificent performances and where are the infantile plays of today?"

Margi, therefore, strives to restore the standard of Kathakali performances to its days of glory. With this objective, then, Margi started a Kathakali *yogam* in 1974 with costumes and equipment from Mankulam Vishnu Nambudiri, a leading Kathakali exponent, who was to be Margi's first guru. It made a beginning with two students and one teacher, Ramachandran Pillai. In due course, well-known Kathakali artistes joined Margi—Haridas for *pattu*, Raman Nambudiri for the *chenda*, Babu for the *maddalam*, and Soma Das for *chutti*. The student strength also increased correspondingly.

Following the model of the Kerala Kalamandalam established by the poet Vallattol in 1930, several other Kathakali training institutes sprouted in various parts of Kerala with time-bound courses, syllabi, examinations, and the issue



2. Kalamandalam Krishnan Nair conducting a *cholliyattom*, a performance training session, at Margi.
Photograph: courtesy Margi.



3. The interesting interior of the Margi *natyagrha*, or auditorium.



of certificates. These were modelled on the Western style of schooling. But there was no centre anywhere for imparting lifelong, full-time training needed for Kathakali in the traditional style followed in Kathakali *yogams*—until the Margi Kathakali Centre was founded in 1974.

Margi functions as a performance-oriented training centre for Kathakali performers who have completed their basic training from other Kathakali training institutes. At Margi, there is no end to a performer's training. Every *attakkatha* (literary text for a Kathakali performance) is subjected to exploratory studies to extract its histrionic potential and a performance manual is prepared on that basis. It is later subjected to training through *cholliyattoms* in the *kalari* and presented as a complete performance score before a jury of Kathakali aesthetes. After several such tests, a code of performance is formulated and with every presentation, even this undergoes artistic variations. Each performance is innovative, with fresh poetic embellishments, different shades of expression, and diverse interpretations. The result is that performances take place over a long span, nearly three to four times the duration normally required.

Margi believes in keeping the size of the organization small. Housed in an old palace in Tiruvananthapuram, it has an open-air traditionally decorated stage in the palace quadrangle, a small hall with terracotta and brick moulded sculptures decorating the walls, with enough place for about fifty appreciative audience members, or *rasikas*, to seat themselves on the floor. The audience can closely observe the subtle expressions of a performer's eyes and face, and the very slow movements of the body, for which Margi has earned a reputation. Margi caters not to the interest of the masses, but to rare discerning *rasikas* possessed of an aesthetic clairvoyance in judging histrionics.

Though Margi started with Mankulam Vishnu Nambudiri, a leading exponent of Kathakali in the Travancore area of Kerala, as its guru, in 1980 Kalamandalam Krishnan Nair, the greatest performer of Kathakali of our time, took over. This was a turning-point, and since then until his death in 1990, Margi has undergone an evolution, developing its own style after choosing the very best from the several existing styles. Now, Margi has the largest repertoire in Kathakali, with thirty-five plays. *Bakavadhom*, *Kirmiravadhom*, *Kalakeyavadhom*, *Rajasuyam* (south), *Pootanamoksham*, *Ravanavijayam*, *Kiratam*, and *Devayanicharitam* have undergone the first stage of progressive development (each of them running for fifteen hours, as against the current six to eight hours). The system of performing two plays, *Nalacharitam* and *Banayuddhom*, has been elaborated to take nearly twenty-five to thirty hours, while one of the oldest plays—*Vicchinnabhishekam*—by the originator of Kathakali, Kottarakkara Tampuran, has been retrieved and presented on stage to cover twenty-five to thirty hours. Other old plays such as *Kharavadhom* and *Setubandhanam* are also being revived. It is Margi's intention to ultimately bring about fifty plays to a standard of perfection.





Initiation And Training

Kalamandalam Padmanabhan Nair

In the past, Kathakali *kaliyogams* (troupes) attached to the great royal families, Nambudiri *illams*, and Nair *taravads*, formed the backbone of training and performance. The training at that time did not follow any institutionalized system with a definite schedule or examinations. The preceptor, the colleagues of the trainee, as well as time, played a part in enriching his practical repertoire, erudition, and imagination.

The members of a *yogam* could also devote all their time to Kathakali since, along with their families, they were taken care of by the patron family. The six months of rain—June to November—were devoted to training in the *kalari*, or training ground, which comprised training-cum-performances, and the remaining six months were entirely spent on performances outside the *kalari*. These performances exposed the troupe to diverse critical assessments inside Kerala and helped its members improve the quality of their performance.

The venue

The place of training is called the *kalari*. According to tradition, it should be located in the south-west or the eastern side of the premises of the training institute; to the east, north-east or south-east of the family temple. If the institute is located in the south, west, or north, the *kalari* should face east, and if the training institute is located in the east, the *kalari* should face west.

The preceptor

The *asan*, or preceptor, who is the head of the *kaliyogam* should be proficient in *natya* (dramatics), *nrtta* (dance), *gita* (music), *vadya* (music—rhythmic instruments alone are used in Kathakali), *prastara* (rhythmic code), *prayoga* (practice), and *sishya nishpadana* (creating good disciples).

The disciple

The chosen disciple should have good physical stamina and strength, essentially, which can be proved during his first three months of strenuous body exercises and *uzhicchil* (oil massage). He should also have intelligence, memory, imagination, devotion, and enthusiasm. His face, though it may assume a different form and shape when he grows up, should have the potential to develop expressive eyes, lips, and cheeks. He should ideally be around twelve years of age, and of medium height. Far-sighted judgement on the part of the *asan* is needed in the choice of a suitable disciple.

Time

The initiation is done at the commencement of the monsoon, generally in June. The Wednesday of the second day of a bright lunar fortnight is considered the

< The unrefined male *kari* character strikes a dramatic pose.

best time, but Sundays, Thursdays, and Fridays may also be chosen. The other days of the week are considered undesirable. Similarly, only sixteen out of the twenty-eight stars are acceptable for initiation. The holidays are based on the lunar calendar. New moon and full moon days, the first day after the new moon and the full moon, and the eighth and the fourteenth day following the full moon and new moon are generally holidays.

Initiation

On the day chosen for initiation, the disciple, after his ablutions early in the morning, goes to the *kalari* and in the auspicious presence of the lighted lamp gives a *dakshina*, an offering, to the *asan* and prostrates before him. The *asan* blesses him and gives him the *kaccha* (a strip of cloth twenty centimetres wide and three metres long) and *mukkoottu* (a special type of oil). The disciple then wraps the *kaccha* around the hip in several layers, leaving a strip to hang in the front, up to the knees. On the advice of the *asan*, he rubs the oil on to the palms until it lathers, lies prostrate, and then, lowering his body applies the oil to the thighs, extending it lavishly to his legs. The oil is spread all over the body except on the stomach. The face is also lightly anointed with it.

Training

During the time of the establishment of the *kaliyogams*, the training system did not strictly follow a time-table, but this only lengthened the period of training.

Training of the eye, three to four o'clock in the morning

The disciple should get up at Brahma *muburtam* (at three o'clock in the morning) and start the training of the eye. Ghee is first applied to the eye, after its suspended particles are dissolved by rubbing it on the palm. Then the pupil of the eye is subjected to various movements, keeping the eye wide open by holding the lids apart with the fingers. The training movements are:

Bhramanam: Movement of the pupil of the eye in circles in clockwise and anticlockwise directions at a varying pace.

Valanam: Diagonal movements of the pupil of the eye from the left-hand top to right-hand bottom and from the right-hand top to left-hand bottom at various speeds.

Padanam: Vertical movements of the pupil downward and upward at a different pace.

Chalanam: Rapid short horizontal movement of the pupil.

Pravesam: Horizontal inward movement of the pupil.

Vivarttana: Movement of the pupil to the left and right ends of the eye.

Samudvrtta: Raising of the pupil of the eye to the top.

Rotation of the pupil of the eye to make the figure∞.

In each of these instances, the eyelids and eyebrows should not move. Every

exercise is to be done forty times until tears begin to continuously stream from the eyes.

There was a system in the past, when this training of the eye was done every night for as long as the moon remained in the sky. On full moon days, this training would continue through all the hours of the night. This is called *nilavirikkuka* (literally, sitting in the moonlight).

Then there are exercises for the movement of the eyelids, cheeks, lips, and other facial features.

After this, fifteen minutes are allowed for ablutions. This is followed by the *chattams* (jumps), *meisadbakam* (body conditioning) exercises, and *uzhicchil* up to half-past seven in the morning.

**Jumps, body exercises for sweating and oil massage,
quarter-past four to half-past seven in the morning**

The disciple now ties the *kaccha* around his hip, and applies the special oil known as *mukkoottu* over his body. He then allows the body to sweat so that it is ready for the oil massage. This *snehasveda* (literally, oil-sweat) treatment is ordained in the Indian medical system of Ayurveda.

Chattam

With hands sweeping circles in the air, the disciple jumps high, the toes of alternate feet touching the head each time. He jumps in this manner twenty-five



1a. A young student offers *dakshina* to his guru.

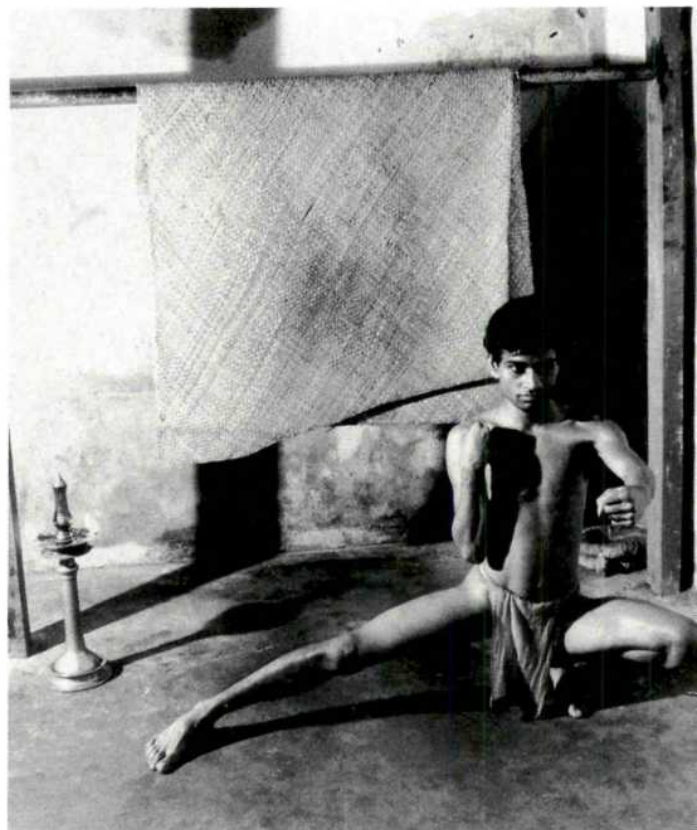


1b. Having tied the special loincloth called *kaccha*, the student assumes a stance.

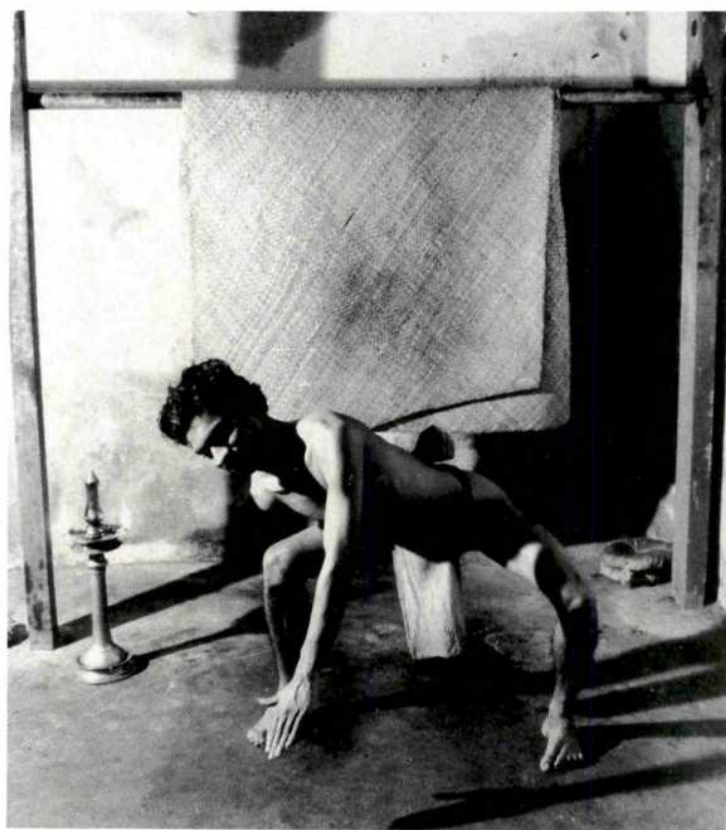


1c. The student prostrates respectfully before his preceptor.

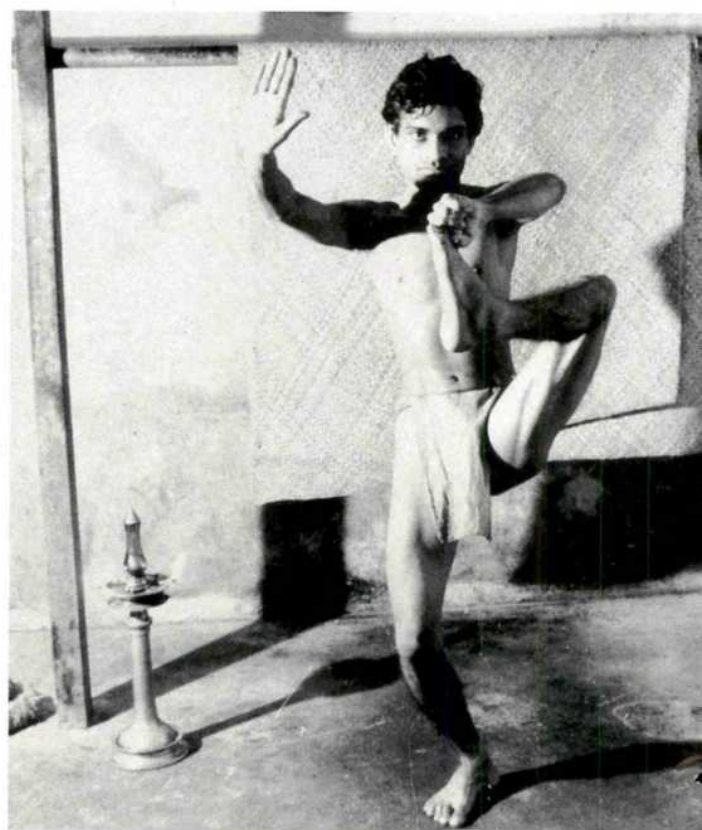
The *Meisadbakam* Movements



2a. *Vechiruttal*: a set stance.



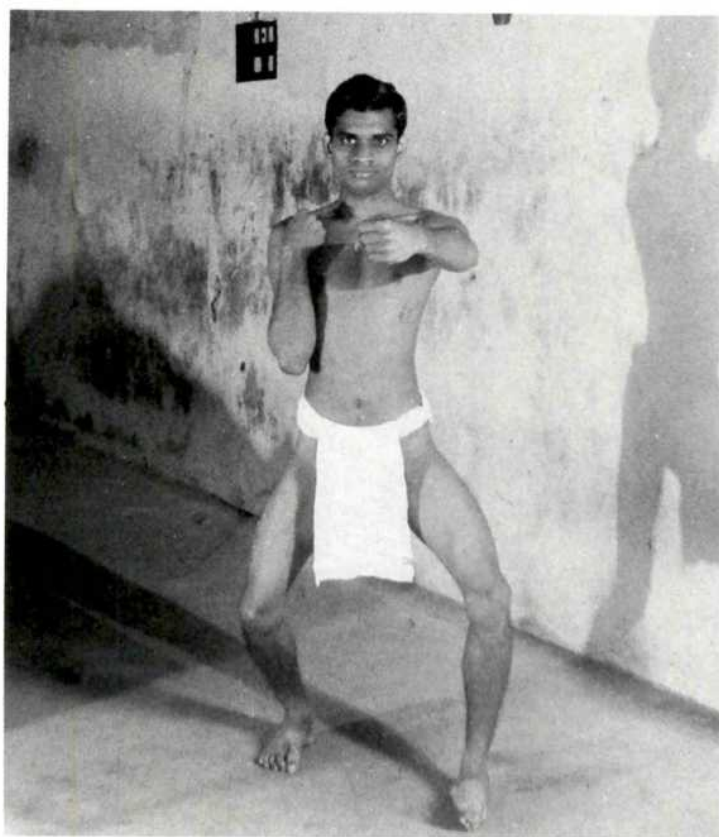
2d. *Valachu-veesal*: another circular swing.



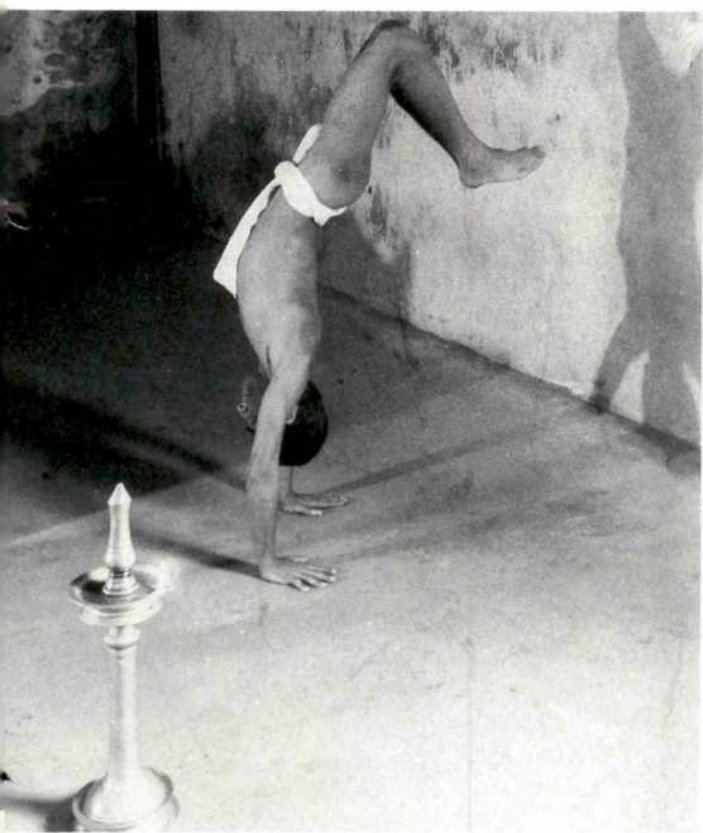
2e. *Thallaviralil pidi*: holding the toe.



Valachu-veesal: a circular swing with both hands.



2c. *Vecbu chavittu*: settled stamping.



Karanam mariyuka: a vertical jump.



2g. *Chattam*: a high jump.

The Various Positions Involved in *Uzbicchil*, the Oil Massage.



3a. Massaging the hips.



3b. Massaging the back with both legs.



3c. Massaging the back with one leg.



3g. Massaging the chest.



3h. Massaging the legs.



3i. Massaging the legs in another position.



1. Massaging the shoulders.



3e. Massaging the student's upturned body.



3f. Massaging the face.



Massaging the thighs.



3k. Massaging the thighs of the student in a sitting position.



3l. The end of the massage is marked by the student massaging the legs of the preceptor.

times along each side of a square and completes the square—that is, he performs a hundred jumps. Then, holding a toe in one hand, he jumps sixteen times.

Meisadbakam

The *meisadbakam* consists of the *namaskarapanchaka* (prostration in five ways). This involves a lot of bodily action: jumping with articulated steps, shifting the position of the legs, swinging the legs back and around, moving the hips laterally, stooping and stretching the body, pressing the body against the floor corner, lowering the body, stamping the feet, upturning the body by swinging hands, somersaulting along a circular path on the floor, and jumping and moving the arms in circles.

Kaal sadhakam

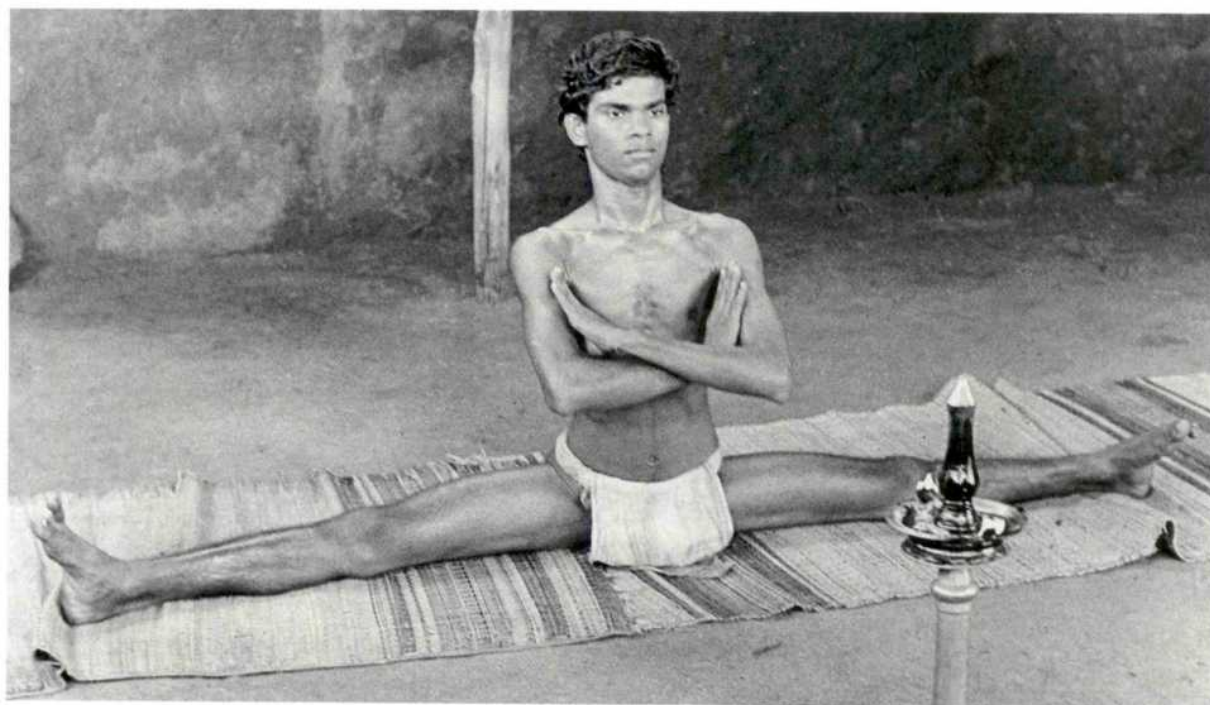
The steps are practised in the *chempada* and *panchari* rhythms, in four tempos. By this time, the disciple is prone to sweat profusely. This is the *snehasveda* treatment. The body is now ready for the *uzhicchil*, which is also a part of Ayurveda treatment.

Uzhicchil

In this elaborate process, the preceptor uses his legs to apply his weight in different degrees through various relative poses and movements. The face alone is massaged with the hands. *Uzhicchil* is done by keeping the disciple's body in the following five positions.

Position 1: Lying with the chest and abdomen on the floor, knees on rings made of cloth, body resting on the elbows, and face lifted from the ground. In this position, the right and left legs are massaged alternately with one foot, while the other foot presses down the hip.

Position 2: Lying with the chest and abdomen pressed against the floor, the hands outstretched diagonally, and the head tilted to one side. In this position, the back is massaged three times in circles. Then the hands are massaged up



4. *Suchikirikkuka*, the special “needle sitting” split stance, is a post-*uzhicchil* exercise.

The Graceful *Chuzhippu* Dance Steps



5a. A circular movement.



5b. A lateral movement.



5c. A low-set stance.



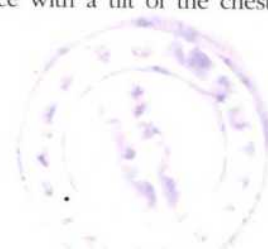
5d. A "pulled up" movement.



5e. A low-set stance with legs close together.



5f. A stance with a tilt of the chest.





6. Students undergo exercises for body conditioning. Photograph: courtesy Margi.



7. A line-up of disciples practise basic steps. Photograph: courtesy Margi.



8. Students perform leg exercises. Photograph: courtesy Margi.

to the inverted palm. Next, the back is massaged crosswise seventeen times; the right leg from its toe to the buttocks, and then along the back up to the palm of the hand five times; from the finger-tips of the outstretched hand along the back up to the hip three times; the shoulders and then along the back to the hip; and finally the buttocks and the hips. All these movements have to be repeated with the head, body, and hands in the lateral reverse position.

Position 3: Lying with the back on the floor, with the face, chest, and abdomen facing the ceiling. The right side of the chest is massaged in circles with the right foot up to the fingers of the outstretched hand three times; then the right hand and the shoulders along the right side of the chest up to the abdomen are massaged forcefully. This is repeated in the lateral reverse position. The area around the eyes is massaged with the thumb and fingers; the eyebrows, eyelids, and either end of the forehead are also massaged five times. The nose, sides of the lips, upper lip, and chin are massaged with the thumb. The thigh to the toe of one leg is massaged holding down the other leg with the other foot of the preceptor. This is repeated on the other side.

Position 4: A sitting posture, with hands supporting the inclined chest. The thigh up to the knee is massaged by rolling the thigh muscles with the feet. Then, with the heel, the leg from the knee to foot is massaged. Standing on one foot, the same leg is massaged up to the thigh. All this is repeated in the lateral reverse position.

Position 5: This involves sitting on the knees with the hands held behind. The thighs are massaged by turning over the thigh muscles. At the end, the disciple massages the legs of the preceptor, from the top down to the feet.

Post-*uzhicbil* exercises

After *uzhicbil*, the disciple practises several jumps, thrusting out his hands, throwing forward his legs, jumping in circles, somersaulting, jumping sideways in circles to the left and right several times, and *suchikirikkuka* ("needle sitting").

Chuzhippu

According to the availability of time, the performer practises several movements which render his dance more graceful. This is called *chuzhippu*. These stances consist of round movements, lateral movements, postures with the body set low, pulling up the body, the body set low with feet held close, chest movements, and sitting with outstretched legs.

A break for bath and breakfast,

half-past seven to half-past eight in the morning

Oil is applied on the head and the disciple gets ready for a bath. The oil is rubbed off with a paste of green turmeric powder (*Curcuma longa*) and green mango (*Mangisera indica*) bark. He then bathes in cold water—preferably in a river or pond. Old patron families with *kaliyogams* each had bathing ponds. After this, the disciple eats a special type of *kanji* (rice porridge) called *chunda kanji*. *Puthari chunda* (*Solanum indicum*), *jiraka* (*Cuminum cyminum*), and *ulli* (*Allium cepa*—onion), well fried in ghee, are added to the *kanji*.

The morning session,

half-past eight to half-past twelve

It is at this time that *chuzhippu* may be carried out if it has not been done

earlier. Then the junior disciples practise dance sequences such as *todayam* and *purappad*, and the seniors, *cholliyattom*.

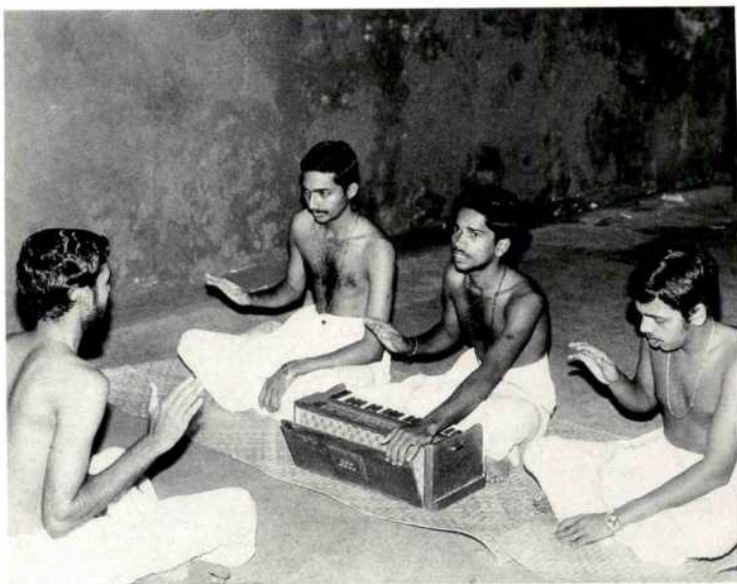
Todayam

This is a pure dance item by incompletely dressed performers accompanied by an invocatory song. Several *kalasams* (pure dance sequences) are rendered behind the curtain in different rhythms and tempos. After a preliminary item called *mukhajalam*, in the rhythm *muriadanta*, there are *kalasams* in medium and fast tempos, followed by *chempadavattom* in two tempos, *champavattom* in medium, fast, and very fast tempos, *pancharivattom*, and the *chempada* rhythm ending in a very fast tempo called *chempada irattivattom*. The *chenda*, a vertical drum, is not used in *todayam*.

Purappad

This is the formal entry of the principal character of the play, presented in a highly stylized manner. The singers render a song in four parts extolling the qualities of the principal character. After each part is sung, the performers representing the principal character and his consort execute stylized dances which have no bearing on the literal meaning of the song. Every dance, therefore, has a distinct “look” corresponding to each of the four parts in the song.

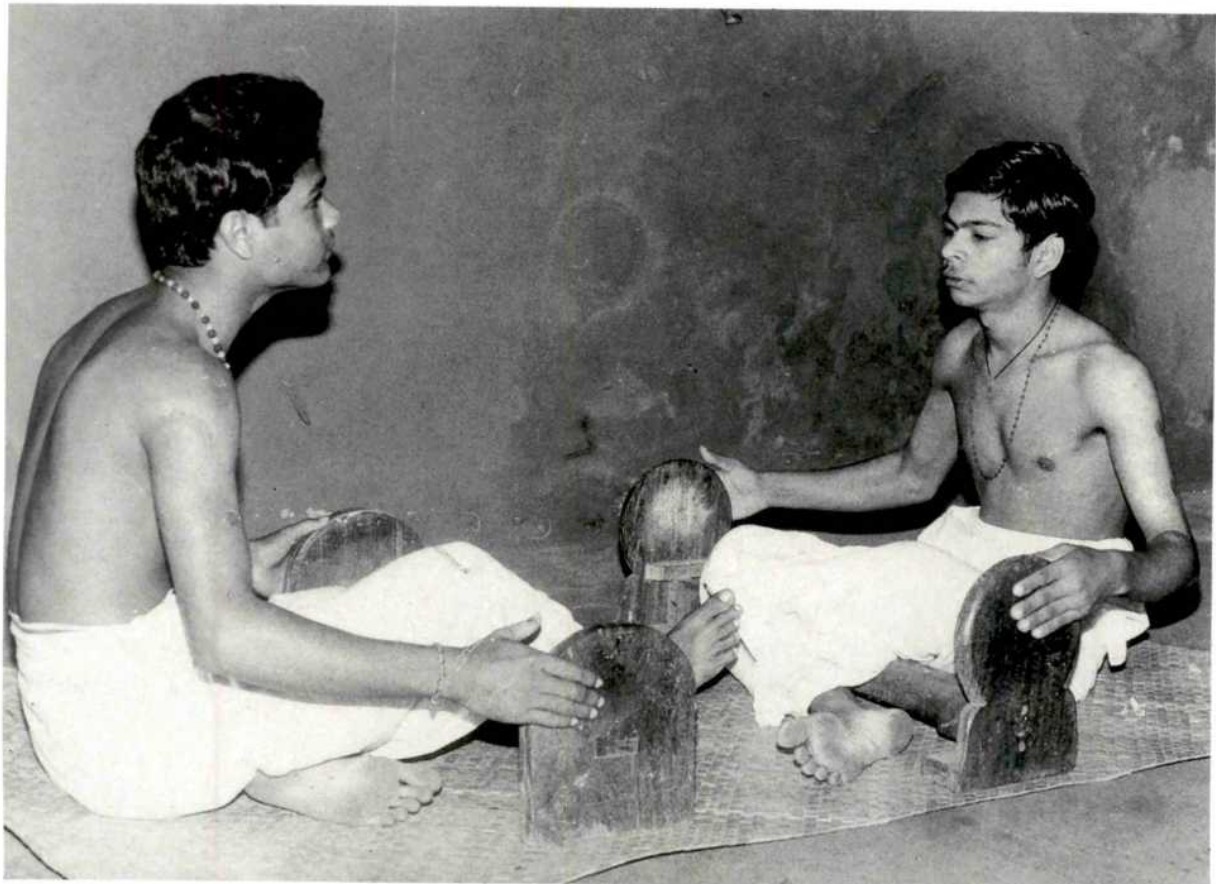
The *purappad* commences with dances behind the curtain with the performer paying obeisance; then in the first look, with the curtain lowered half-way, the performer uses eye movements, in the second look he dances with the upper part of the body, in the third look, he dances using the entire body—a combined dance of male and female dancers—and in the fourth look it is the full-fledged dance of the male character. The dances are rendered in the *chempada* rhythm taken at medium tempo with twelve rhythmic cycles for the first look, seventeen rhythmic cycles for the second look, another seventeen for the third look, followed by *chempada*, *panchari*, and *adanta* rhythms in the fourth look. While the junior students practise *todayam* and *purappad*, the senior ones practise *cholliyattom* (performance training).



9. A music lesson in progress. Photograph: courtesy Margi.



10. Lessons on the vertical *chenda* drum; initial practice takes place on a wooden stump, hence the sitting posture. Photograph: courtesy Margi.



11. Training on the horizontal *maddalam* drum is initially conducted on wooden planks. Photograph: courtesy Margi.



12. The ensemble on drums; the actual instruments are now employed. Photograph: courtesy Margi.

Rest,

half-past noon to two o'clock in the afternoon

During this time the disciples take a break for lunch and rest.

Study of literature,

two o'clock to half-past two in the afternoon

In the afternoon, for half an hour from two o'clock, the theory of dance and drama, and the literature of Kathakali are taught.

Cholliyattom,

half-past two in the afternoon to half-past five in the evening

The performance of the literary text, complete with musical and rhythmic support without make-up, is practised for three hours.

Bath, prayers, and relaxation,

half-past five to half-past seven in the evening

After relaxing for half an hour, the disciples take a bath and offer prayers at the family temple.

Miscellaneous night practice,

half-past seven in the evening to nine o'clock at night

At this time in the evening the students start practising the following movements: marking rhythm with the hands, turning the head, moving the palms and fingers, turning the wrist, moving the eyebrows with a smile, practising neck movements, moving the lower eyelids, dilating the eyes, moving the ends of the lips, and accompanying the preceding movements with gestures of the hand.

Senior students practice the *cholliyattom* in summer, dressed in head bands and anklets, to the accompaniment of song and drums.

Retiring to bed,

nine o'clock in the night

Disciples go to bed at nine o'clock in the night, to get up at three o'clock the next morning.

In the old days, even senior performers went through *uzhicchil*, but for a shorter duration. Training, then, was lifelong. The performers learn in the course of teaching and performing. This is the present system at Margi too—there is no end to training. In the Kerala Kalamandalam, the training course for a *vesha* (role) is six years long, with two additional years for advanced training.

The following sixteen plays are taught during these years: *Balivadbom*, *Bakavadbom*, *Kalyanasougandhikam*, *Kirmiravadbom*, *Kalakeyavadbom*, *Narakasuravadbom*, *Rugminiswayamvaram*, *Ravanolbhavam*, *Ravanavijayam*, *Kichakavadbom*, *Uttaraswayamvaram*, *Dakshayagam*, *Subhadraharanam*, *Rajasuyam* (*Vadakkan*), *Lavanasuravadbom*, and *Santanagopalam*.

Advanced students are also taught "*Kuvalaya vilochane*" from *Nalacharitam* and "*Kamaladalam*" from *Kartaviryarjunavijayam*.



Words in the first column of both, the Glossary and List of Technical Terms, appear according to the way they have been spelt in the text. The second column indicates their phonetic equivalent. Deleted from the List of Technical Terms are words whose textual spellings are the same as their phonetic equivalent.

Glossary

<i>abhidha</i>	<i>abhidha</i>	the power of denotation	<i>amatya</i>	<i>amaatya</i>	minister
<i>abhinaya</i>	<i>abhinayam</i>	aesthetic communication	<i>amrita</i>	<i>amritam</i>	ambrosia
<i>abhinaya sangita</i>	<i>abhinaya sangeetam</i>	music for dramatic enactment	<i>ananda</i>	<i>aanandam</i>	happiness ranging from enjoyment to bliss
<i>abhyasa</i>	<i>abhyaasam</i>	training	<i>angika</i>	<i>aangikam</i>	body kinetics
<i>adbhuta</i>	<i>adbhutam</i>	wonder	<i>angikabhinaya</i>	<i>aangika-abhinayam</i>	communication through body kinetics
<i>adhyaropa</i>	<i>adhyaaropam</i>	something superimposed on the real	<i>anukarana</i>	<i>anukaranam</i>	imitation
<i>agni</i>	<i>agni</i>	fire	<i>ap</i>	<i>ap</i>	water
<i>abambodha</i>	<i>abambodham</i>	union of self-confidence and discrimination	<i>arangu keli</i>	<i>arangu keli</i>	commencement of the performance announced by the percussion ensemble
<i>abambodh-ananda</i>	<i>abambodha-anandam</i>	joy from the union of self-confidence and discrimination	<i>aropa</i>	<i>aaropam</i>	superimposition
<i>abankara</i>	<i>abankaaram</i>	ego	<i>artha</i>	<i>artham</i>	meaning, resource, asset
<i>abarya</i>	<i>aabaaryam</i>	body transformation	<i>arya</i>	<i>aarya</i>	brahmin
<i>abaryabhinaya</i>	<i>aahaarya-abhinayam</i>	body transformation through costume and make-up	<i>asan</i>	<i>aasaan</i>	teacher, preceptor
<i>ajagaraka-balitam</i>	<i>ajagaraka-balitam</i>	item in Kathakali	<i>asari</i>	<i>aasari</i>	carpenter
<i>ajjuke</i>	<i>ajjuke</i>	courtesan	<i>asoka</i>	<i>asokam</i>	spring flower
<i>akasa</i>	<i>aakaasam</i>	sky	<i>asru</i>	<i>asru</i>	tears
<i>aksharakalam</i>	<i>aksharakaalam</i>	time-unit	<i>asura</i>	<i>asura</i>	demon, aggressive character
<i>alambana</i>	<i>aalambana</i>	object	<i>atmavu</i>	<i>aatmaavu</i>	soul
<i>alambana</i>	<i>aalambana</i>	primary	<i>attakkatha</i>	<i>aattakkatha</i>	literary text for Kathakali performance
<i>vibbava</i>	<i>vibbaavam</i>	dependant cause	<i>attaprakaram</i>	<i>aattaprakaaram</i>	performance manual for staging a Kathakali play
<i>alaukika</i>	<i>alaukikam</i>	non-worldly	<i>attom</i>	<i>aattom</i>	performance, dance
<i>alekhya</i>	<i>aalekhyam</i>	drawing	<i>avakasa</i>	<i>avakaasam</i>	to make room
			<i>avanaddham</i>	<i>avanaddham</i>	hollow musical instrument with a leather cover
			<i>avarana</i>	<i>aavaranam</i>	cover
			<i>bhadre</i>	<i>bhadre</i>	good lady
			<i>bbagavan</i>	<i>bbagavaan</i>	lord
			<i>bbagavati</i>	<i>bbagavati</i>	goddess
			<i>bhasbavidhana</i>	<i>bbaashaa-vidhaanam</i>	linguistic usage
			<i>bhashya</i>	<i>bbaashyam</i>	explanation, commentary
			<i>bhashyakara</i>	<i>bbaashya-kaaran</i>	commentator
			<i>bhattini</i>	<i>bbhattini</i>	queen
			<i>bbava</i>	<i>bbaavam</i>	impression

<i>bhavayitri</i>	<i>bhaavayitree</i>	imaginative response	<i>darpana</i>	<i>darpanam</i>	mirror
<i>bhavayitri</i>	<i>bhaavayitree</i>	imaginative	<i>darsana</i>	<i>darsanam</i>	philosophy
<i>pratibha</i>	<i>pratibha</i>	insight of the connoisseur	<i>desi</i>	<i>desi</i>	regional
<i>bhayanaka</i>	<i>bhayanakam</i>	fear	<i>deva</i>	<i>devaa</i>	god
<i>bibhatsa</i>	<i>beebhatsam</i>	disgust	<i>dbanasi</i>	<i>dbanaasi</i>	finale marked by a short benedictory verse rendered with a few dance steps
<i>brabman</i>	<i>brabman</i>	ultimate reality			
<i>buddbi</i>	<i>buddbi</i>	intellect, discrimination			
<i>chaitanya</i>	<i>chaitanyam</i>	life	<i>dharmam</i>	<i>dharmam</i>	duty
<i>chamatkara</i>	<i>chamatkaaram</i>	incredible delight	<i>dbvanipadta</i>	<i>dbvanipaadiam</i>	sub-text
<i>champaka</i>	<i>champaka</i>	spring flower	<i>drsya</i>	<i>drsya</i>	visual
<i>chattam</i>	<i>chaattam</i>	jump	<i>drsyaabhinaya</i>	<i>drsya-abhinayam</i>	visual aesthetic communication
<i>chaturvarna</i>	<i>chaturvarnam</i>	four colours, castes	<i>duta</i>	<i>dootan</i>	messenger
<i>chayillyam</i>	<i>chayillyam</i>	special "stone" paint used in make-up	<i>ekalochana</i>	<i>ekalochanam</i>	expression of two different emotions in two eyes which is made to appear simultaneous
<i>chenda</i>	<i>chenda</i>	vertical drum			
<i>chenkala</i>	<i>chenkala</i>	gong			
<i>cheria</i>	<i>cheria</i>	small			
<i>cheshtimam</i>	<i>cheshtimam</i>	wrapped objects which are made to move	<i>gadgada</i>	<i>gadgadam</i>	stuttering voice
<i>chidananda</i>	<i>chidaanandam</i>	ultimate <i>ananda</i>	<i>gandba</i>	<i>gandbam</i>	smell
<i>cholliyattom</i>	<i>cholliyaattom</i>	recitative performance, speech and dance, gestural representation of the literary text, textual interpretation	<i>gandharva</i>	<i>gandharva</i>	celestial beings
		narrative linking scenes	<i>ghana</i>	<i>ghanam</i>	solid
<i>choornika</i>	<i>choornika</i>	special rice porridge which a Kathakali disciple eats after his ritual bath	<i>gita</i>	<i>geetam</i>	music, song
<i>chunda kanji</i>	<i>chunda kanji</i>	white boundary for facial make-up	<i>gunavrtti</i>	<i>gunavrtti</i>	characteristic in poetry
<i>chuvanna taadi</i>	<i>chuvanna taadi</i>	red beard character	<i>hamsa</i>	<i>hamsam</i>	swan
<i>chuzhippu</i>	<i>chuzhippu</i>	steps rendering a dancer's movements more graceful	<i>basta mudra</i>	<i>basta mudra</i>	hand gesture
			<i>hasya</i>	<i>baasyam</i>	<i>rasa</i> evoked by a comic act
<i>daksbina</i>	<i>daksbina</i>	offering	<i>homakunda</i>	<i>homakundam</i>	sacrificial fire pit
<i>dandaka</i>	<i>dandakam</i>	interconnecting stanza indicating events	<i>brdaya-samvadam</i>	<i>brdaya-samvaadam</i>	concordant mental response
			<i>idakka</i>	<i>idakka</i>	small drum
			<i>idantala</i>	<i>idantala</i>	left face of <i>chenda</i> drum
			<i>ibaloka</i>	<i>ibalokam</i>	this world
			<i>ilakiyattom</i>	<i>ilakiyaattom</i>	improvisational acting, extra textual interpretation
			<i>ilattalam</i>	<i>ilattaalam</i>	cymbals
			<i>illam</i>	<i>illam</i>	traditional house of the Nambudiri
			<i>indrajala</i>	<i>indrajaalam</i>	magic
			<i>indriyananda</i>	<i>indriya-anandam</i>	sensual pleasure

<i>jagrat</i> <i>jiraka</i>	<i>jaagrat</i> <i>jeerakam</i>	wakeful rice pudding ingredient, <i>Cuminum</i> <i>cyminum</i>	<i>kesadipadam</i> <i>kridaniyam</i> <i>krodha</i> <i>kumara</i>	<i>kesaadipaadam</i> <i>kridaneeyam</i> <i>krodbam</i> <i>kumaara</i>	head to foot sport fury, anger adolescent boy
<i>jivan</i> <i>jivatma</i> <i>jnanendriya</i>	<i>jeevan</i> <i>jeevaatmaavu</i> <i>jnaanendriyam</i>	life living soul five senses of perception	<i>lakshana</i> <i>laukika</i> <i>laukikatuwa</i> <i>laya</i> <i>lobha</i> <i>lokadbarmi</i> <i>lokavrita</i> <i>anukarana</i>	<i>lakshana</i> <i>laukikam</i> <i>laukikatwam</i> <i>layam</i> <i>lobham</i> <i>lokadbarmi</i> <i>lokavrita</i> <i>anukaranam</i>	characteristic worldly worldliness tempo greed imitative acting imitation of the affairs of the world
<i>kaal sadhakam</i> <i>kaccha</i>	<i>kaal</i> <i>saadbakam</i> <i>kaccha</i>	practice of steps strip of cloth twenty centimetres wide and three metres long sidelong glance monsoon flower tempo	<i>maddalam</i> <i>manana</i> <i>manas</i> <i>manasikananda</i> <i>manayola</i>	<i>maddalam</i> <i>manana</i> <i>manas</i> <i>maanasik- aanandam</i> <i>manayola</i>	horizontal drum contemplative mind mental delight special yellow paste used in make-up low octave devotional song supporting dexterous rhythmic ensemble transcendental art beyond space and time time-unit illusion body conditioning exercise harmonious combination of different percussion instruments rhythmic ensemble polished character, mainly woman or sage indicative symbolic gesture auspicious time facial expressions
<i>kadaksba</i> <i>kaita</i> <i>kala pramana</i>	<i>kadaksba</i> <i>kaita</i> <i>pramaanam</i>	training ground pure dance in a Kathakali performance traditional lamp used in the Kathakali performance troupe lust, desire rice porridge <i>asoka</i> flower action of a performer imaginative action imagination brought out through action primitive tribal character	<i>mandrastayi</i> <i>manjutara</i> <i>margi</i> <i>matra</i> <i>maya</i> <i>meisadbakam</i>	<i>mandrastaayi</i> <i>manjutara</i> <i>maargi</i> <i>maatra</i> <i>maaya</i> <i>meisaadbakam</i>	low octave devotional song supporting dexterous rhythmic ensemble transcendental art beyond space and time time-unit illusion body conditioning exercise harmonious combination of different percussion instruments rhythmic ensemble polished character, mainly woman or sage indicative symbolic gesture auspicious time facial expressions
<i>kalari</i> <i>kalasam</i>	<i>kalari</i> <i>kalaasam</i>	performance traditional lamp used in the Kathakali performance troupe lust, desire rice porridge <i>asoka</i> flower action of a performer imaginative action imagination brought out through action primitive tribal character	<i>mela</i> <i>melappadam</i> <i>minukku</i> <i>mudra</i> <i>muhurtam</i> <i>mukhabbinaya</i> <i>mukhajalam</i>	<i>melam</i> <i>melappadam</i> <i>minukku</i> <i>mudra</i> <i>muhoortam</i> <i>mukha- abbinayam</i> <i>mukbajaalam</i>	percussion instruments rhythmic ensemble polished character, mainly woman or sage indicative symbolic gesture auspicious time facial expressions preliminary rhythmic sequence special oil lower back
<i>kalivilakku</i>	<i>kalivilakku</i>	performance traditional lamp used in the Kathakali performance troupe lust, desire rice porridge <i>asoka</i> flower action of a performer imaginative action imagination brought out through action primitive tribal character	<i>marga</i> <i>matra</i> <i>maya</i> <i>meisadbakam</i>	<i>maargi</i> <i>maatra</i> <i>maaya</i> <i>meisaadbakam</i>	transcendental art beyond space and time time-unit illusion body conditioning exercise harmonious combination of different percussion instruments rhythmic ensemble polished character, mainly woman or sage indicative symbolic gesture auspicious time facial expressions
<i>kaliyogam</i> <i>kama</i> <i>kanji</i> <i>kankeli</i> <i>karayit</i>	<i>kaliyogam</i> <i>kaamam</i> <i>kanji</i> <i>kankeli</i> <i>kaarayit</i>	action of a performer imaginative action imagination brought out through action primitive tribal character	<i>mela</i> <i>melappadam</i> <i>minukku</i> <i>mudra</i> <i>muhurtam</i> <i>mukhabbinaya</i> <i>mukhajalam</i>	<i>melam</i> <i>melappadam</i> <i>minukku</i> <i>mudra</i> <i>muhoortam</i> <i>mukha- abbinayam</i> <i>mukbajaalam</i>	percussion instruments rhythmic ensemble polished character, mainly woman or sage indicative symbolic gesture auspicious time facial expressions
<i>karayitri</i> <i>karayitri</i> <i>pratibha</i>	<i>kaarayitree</i> <i>kaarayitree</i> <i>pratibha</i>	action imagination brought out through action primitive tribal character	<i>mela</i> <i>melappadam</i> <i>minukku</i> <i>mudra</i> <i>muhurtam</i> <i>mukhabbinaya</i> <i>mukhajalam</i>	<i>melam</i> <i>melappadam</i> <i>minukku</i> <i>mudra</i> <i>muhoortam</i> <i>mukha- abbinayam</i> <i>mukbajaalam</i>	percussion instruments rhythmic ensemble polished character, mainly woman or sage indicative symbolic gesture auspicious time facial expressions
<i>kari</i>	<i>kari</i>	primitive tribal character	<i>mela</i> <i>melappadam</i> <i>minukku</i> <i>mudra</i> <i>muhurtam</i> <i>mukhabbinaya</i> <i>mukhajalam</i>	<i>melam</i> <i>melappadam</i> <i>minukku</i> <i>mudra</i> <i>muhoortam</i> <i>mukha- abbinayam</i> <i>mukbajaalam</i>	percussion instruments rhythmic ensemble polished character, mainly woman or sage indicative symbolic gesture auspicious time facial expressions
<i>karmendriyas</i>	<i>karmendriyams</i>	five senses of action sympathy story aggressive character	<i>melappadam</i> <i>minukku</i> <i>mudra</i> <i>muhurtam</i> <i>mukhabbinaya</i> <i>mukhajalam</i>	<i>melappadam</i> <i>minukku</i> <i>mudra</i> <i>muhoortam</i> <i>mukha- abbinayam</i> <i>mukbajaalam</i>	rhythmic ensemble polished character, mainly woman or sage indicative symbolic gesture auspicious time facial expressions
<i>karuna</i> <i>katha</i> <i>katti</i>	<i>karunam</i> <i>katha</i> <i>katti</i>	sympathy story aggressive character	<i>melappadam</i> <i>minukku</i> <i>mudra</i> <i>muhurtam</i> <i>mukhabbinaya</i> <i>mukhajalam</i>	<i>melappadam</i> <i>minukku</i> <i>mudra</i> <i>muhoortam</i> <i>mukha- abbinayam</i> <i>mukbajaalam</i>	rhythmic ensemble polished character, mainly woman or sage indicative symbolic gesture auspicious time facial expressions
<i>kavya</i> <i>kavyabetu</i> <i>kavyatmaka</i> <i>kavyoddesyam</i> <i>kazhchakkaran</i>	<i>kaavyam</i> <i>kaavyabetu</i> <i>kaavyaatmakam</i> <i>kaavyoddesyam</i> <i>kaazhcha- kkaaran</i>	poetry reason for poetry poetic purpose of poetry spectator	<i>mukkoottu</i> <i>muladbaram</i>	<i>mukkoottu</i> <i>muladbaram</i>	preliminary rhythmic sequence special oil lower back
<i>keki</i> <i>kesabbaram</i>	<i>keki</i> <i>kesabbaaram</i>	peacock dance kind of headgear	<i>mukkoottu</i> <i>muladbaram</i>	<i>mukkoottu</i> <i>muladbaram</i>	preliminary rhythmic sequence special oil lower back

<i>namam</i>	<i>naamam</i>	emblem, name	<i>putbari chunda</i>	<i>putbari chunda</i>	rice pudding
<i>namaskara-</i>	<i>namaskaara-</i>	prostration in			ingredient,
<i>panchaka</i>	<i>panchakam</i>	five ways			<i>Solanum</i>
<i>nata</i>	<i>natan</i>	single character			<i>indicum</i>
<i>natya</i>	<i>naatyam</i>	drama, dramatics	<i>raga</i>	<i>raagam</i>	core melody
		or gestural	<i>raja</i>	<i>raaja</i>	king
<i>natyadbarmi</i>	<i>naatyadbarmi</i>	representation	<i>rajasic</i>	<i>raajasica</i>	dynamic,
<i>natyagrha</i>	<i>naatyagrha</i>	stylized acting			aggressive
<i>natyatmaka</i>	<i>naatyaatmakam</i>	auditorium	<i>rasa</i>	<i>rasam</i>	essence,
<i>navarasa</i>	<i>navarasam</i>	dramatic			emotion, flavour,
		nine principal			relish, expression
<i>nilavirikkuka</i>	<i>nilaavirikkuka</i>	<i>rasas</i>	<i>rasabhinaya</i>	<i>rasaabhinayam</i>	of rapture
<i>nrta</i>	<i>nrttam</i>	sitting in the			emotive
		moonlight			histrionics,
<i>om</i>	<i>om</i>	dance	<i>rasaswadana</i>	<i>rasaswaadanam</i>	emotional acting
		primordial sound			enjoyment
<i>paccha</i>	<i>paccha</i>		<i>rasa vayu</i>	<i>rasam vaayu</i>	through <i>rasa</i>
		gentle heroic			motive life-breath
<i>padala</i>	<i>paadalam</i>	character			for facial
<i>padam</i>	<i>padam</i>	summer flower	<i>rasika</i>	<i>rasika</i>	expression
		spoken passage,			one who
		either	<i>rati</i>	<i>rati</i>	appreciates
<i>padartha</i>	<i>padaartha</i>	monologue or	<i>raudra</i>	<i>raudram</i>	erotic love
<i>abhinaya</i>	<i>abhinayam</i>	dialogue	<i>romancha</i>	<i>romaancham</i>	fearsome
<i>pakarnattom</i>	<i>pakarnaattom</i>	at word level	<i>rupa</i>	<i>roopam</i>	horripilation
		multiple			form
<i>palazhi</i>	<i>paalazhi</i>	transformational	<i>sabda</i>	<i>sabdam</i>	word in poetry,
<i>panchabhuta</i>	<i>panchabhootam</i>	acting	<i>sadrsya</i>	<i>saadrsyam</i>	sound
<i>panchama</i>	<i>panchamam</i>	Ocean of Milk	<i>sabrdayan</i>	<i>sabrdayan</i>	similarity
<i>pantadi</i>	<i>pantadi</i>	five elements	<i>Saiva darsana</i>	<i>Saiva darsanam</i>	connoisseur
<i>parimitakshara-</i>	<i>parimita-</i>	fifth note in music			Shaivite
<i>kalpitam</i>	<i>aksharakalpitam</i>	game of ball	<i>sakshi</i>	<i>saakshi</i>	philosophy
<i>pattu</i>	<i>paattu</i>	axiom	<i>samana-</i>	<i>samaana-</i>	witness
<i>pidta</i>	<i>peedtam</i>	song	<i>brdayam</i>	<i>brdayam</i>	similar-minded
<i>ponnani</i>	<i>ponnaani</i>	wooden stool	<i>sambhoga</i>	<i>sambhoga</i>	love in union
<i>prakrti</i>	<i>prakrti</i>	principal singer	<i>sandhimam</i>	<i>sandhimam</i>	jointed objects
<i>pralaya</i>	<i>pralayam</i>	nature	<i>sandhya keli</i>	<i>sandhyaa keli</i>	percussion
		swoon, total			ensemble which
<i>prana</i>	<i>praanan</i>	annihilation			announces the
<i>prasnika</i>	<i>praasnikan</i>	life-breath	<i>sangha</i>	<i>sangham</i>	forthcoming
<i>prastara</i>	<i>prastaaram</i>	assessor	<i>sankidi</i>	<i>sankidi</i>	performance at
<i>pratibha</i>	<i>pratibha</i>	rhythmic code	<i>santa</i>	<i>saantham</i>	sunset
<i>pratibimbam</i>	<i>pratibimbam</i>	imagination	<i>saptaswara</i>	<i>saptaswaram</i>	troupe
<i>prayoga</i>	<i>prayogam</i>	reflection			supporting singer
<i>preksbaka</i>	<i>preksbakan</i>	practice	<i>sarira</i>	<i>sareeram</i>	tranquillity
<i>prithvi</i>	<i>prithvi</i>	spectator	<i>sattwa</i>	<i>sattwam</i>	seven syllables in
<i>purappad</i>	<i>purappaad</i>	earth	<i>sattwika</i>	<i>saattwikam</i>	music
		elaborate stylized	<i>sattwikabhinaya</i>	<i>saattwika-</i>	body, corpus
		dance sequence		<i>abhinayam</i>	mind, life-breath
		serving as a	<i>sattwikatwa</i>	<i>saattwikatwam</i>	life-breath, good
		prelude			<i>abhinaya</i>
<i>purusba</i>	<i>purusban</i>	man			utilizing life-breath
<i>pushta</i>	<i>pushtam</i>	model work			pure

<i>sattwika bhava</i>	<i>saattwika bhaavam</i>	spontaneous expression of the mind	<i>tatam</i>	<i>tatam</i>	stringed concept
<i>siddhi-vyanjakam</i>	<i>siddhi-vyanjakam</i>	review of the success of drama	<i>tattwa</i>	<i>tattwam</i>	philosophically-oriented person
<i>sishya</i>	<i>sishya</i>	disciple	<i>tejas</i>	<i>tejas</i>	energy
<i>sishya</i>	<i>sishya</i>	grooming good	<i>tekkan</i>	<i>tekkan</i>	southern
<i>nishpadana</i>	<i>nishpaadanam</i>	disciples	<i>tiranokku</i>	<i>tiranokku</i>	"curtain look"
<i>sloka</i>	<i>sloka</i>	narrative quatrain in Sanskrit, stanza	<i>tiranottam</i>	<i>tiranottam</i>	"curtain look"
<i>smrti</i>	<i>smrti</i>	recollection	<i>todayam</i>	<i>todayam</i>	pure dance
<i>snehasveda</i>	<i>snehasveda</i>	oil induced sweat			number
<i>soka</i>	<i>sokam</i>	sorrow			performed by incompletely dressed artistes
<i>sparsa</i>	<i>sparsam</i>	touch			in female roles, accompanied by an invocatory song
<i>sravya</i>	<i>sravya</i>	auditive, audio	<i>tooppu</i>	<i>tooppu</i>	twigs and leaves
<i>sravyabhinaya</i>	<i>sravya-abhinayam</i>	auditory aesthetic communication	<i>touryatrikam</i>	<i>touryatrikam</i>	combination of three elements
<i>srngara</i>	<i>srngaaram</i>	amour	<i>trayisadbana</i>	<i>trayisaadbanam</i>	fulfilment of <i>dharma</i> , <i>artha</i> , and <i>kama</i>
<i>srngarapadam</i>	<i>srngaarapadam</i>	amorous scene			three levels
<i>srngara rasa</i>	<i>srngaara rasam</i>	amorous emotion	<i>tristayi</i>	<i>tristaayi</i>	narrative dance
<i>stambha</i>	<i>stambham</i>	stupor	<i>tullal</i>	<i>tullal</i>	form
<i>stayi bhava</i>	<i>staayee bhaavam</i>	permanent emotion			
<i>stri vesha</i>	<i>stree vesham</i>	female role	<i>udakavadya</i>	<i>udakavaadyam</i>	rhythm in water
<i>suddha nrtta</i>	<i>suddha nrttam</i>	pure dance	<i>uddipaka</i>	<i>uddeepaka</i>	stimulant
<i>suddha tala</i>	<i>suddha taala</i>	pure rhythm	<i>uddipana</i>	<i>uddeepana</i>	subsidiary
<i>vadya mela</i>	<i>vaadya melam</i>	orchestra	<i>vibhava</i>	<i>vibhaavam</i>	stimulants
<i>sukta</i>	<i>sookta</i>	philosophical doctrine	<i>ulli</i>	<i>ulli</i>	onion
<i>sumanassu</i>	<i>sumanaassu</i>	clean-minded	<i>utpreksba</i>	<i>utpreksba</i>	poetic embellishment
<i>sushira</i>	<i>sushiram</i>	perforated pipes	<i>utsaba</i>	<i>utsaaham</i>	vitality
<i>sutra</i>	<i>sootram</i>	philosophical aphorism	<i>uzhicbil</i>	<i>uzhicbil</i>	oil massage
<i>sutradbara</i>	<i>sootradhaaran</i>	stage manager	<i>vachika</i>	<i>vaachikam</i>	vocal
<i>sutrakara</i>	<i>sootrakaaran</i>	writer	<i>vadakkan</i>	<i>vadakkan</i>	northern
<i>sveda</i>	<i>svedam</i>	sweating	<i>vadya</i>	<i>vaadyam</i>	instrumental music
<i>swamini</i>	<i>swaamini</i>	royal one	<i>vaivarnya</i>	<i>vaivarnyam</i>	change of skin colour
<i>swapna</i>	<i>swapnam</i>	dream			at sentence level
<i>swara</i>	<i>swaram</i>	musical note	<i>vakyartha</i>	<i>vakyaartha</i>	
<i>swarabbeda</i>	<i>swarabbedam</i>	convulsive utterance	<i>abhinaya</i>	<i>abhinayam</i>	
<i>swara vayu</i>	<i>swara vaayu</i>	vital breath for voice	<i>vakyavidhana</i>	<i>vaakya-vidhaanam</i>	modes of address
<i>taadi</i>	<i>taadi</i>	red beard	<i>valantala</i>	<i>valantala</i>	right side of <i>cbenda</i> drum
<i>tala</i>	<i>taalam</i>	character	<i>valia</i>	<i>valia</i>	big
<i>talavattom</i>	<i>taalavattom</i>	rhythm	<i>vandana sloka</i>	<i>vandana slokam</i>	invocatory <i>sloka</i>
<i>tamasic</i>	<i>taamasic</i>	rhythmic cycle	<i>varttika</i>	<i>vaarttikam</i>	commentary
<i>tanmatra</i>	<i>tanmaatra</i>	evil	<i>vatsa</i>	<i>vatsa</i>	dear one
		three general elements of perception	<i>vayu</i>	<i>vaayu</i>	air, wind
<i>tapasya</i>	<i>tapasya</i>	penance	<i>vella taadi</i>	<i>vella taadi</i>	white beard
<i>taravad</i>	<i>taravaad</i>	Nair family			character

<i>vepatbu</i>	<i>vepatbu</i>	trembling	<i>naga</i>	<i>naagan</i>
<i>vesha</i>	<i>vesham</i>	role, costume	<i>niraval</i>	<i>niravaal</i>
<i>veshakkaran</i>	<i>veshakkaraan</i>	role-player	<i>nishada</i>	<i>nishaadam</i>
<i>vikshepa</i>	<i>vikshepam</i>	manifestation of <i>brahman</i>	<i>nokkikanal</i>	<i>nokkikkaanal</i>
<i>vipralambha</i>	<i>vipralambha</i>	love in separation	<i>padi raga</i>	<i>paadi raagam</i>
<i>vira</i>	<i>veeram</i>	valour	<i>pallava</i>	<i>pallavam</i>
<i>vishaya</i>	<i>vishayam</i>	subject	<i>panchama</i>	<i>panchamam</i>
<i>vishayananda</i>	<i>vishaya-anandam</i>	subject-oriented pleasure	<i>panchari</i>	<i>panchaari</i>
<i>vyajimam</i>	<i>vyajimam</i>	indicating objects	<i>pataka</i>	<i>pataaka</i>
<i>vyanjana</i>	<i>vyanjana</i>	connotation	<i>punnagavarali</i>	<i>punnaaga-varaali</i>
<i>vyutpatti</i>	<i>vyutpatti</i>	scholarship	<i>purvali</i>	<i>poorvaali</i>
<i>yogam</i>	<i>yogam</i>	troupe	<i>purvi</i>	<i>poorvi</i>
<i>yuga</i>	<i>yuga</i>	age	<i>rakta chandana</i>	<i>rakta chandanam</i>
			<i>risabhha</i>	<i>risabham</i>

List Of Technical Terms

<i>alankarakkai</i>	<i>alankaarakkai</i>	<i>samana</i>	<i>samaanan</i>
<i>alapana</i>	<i>alapana</i>	<i>samanta</i>	<i>saamanta</i>
<i>andolana</i>	<i>andolana</i>	<i>samudvrtta</i>	<i>samudvrttam</i>
<i>chaturthi</i>	<i>chaturthi</i>	<i>sankara-bharanam</i>	<i>sankaraa-bharanam</i>
<i>apana</i>	<i>apaanan</i>	<i>sarpa siras</i>	<i>sarpa sirassu</i>
<i>arala</i>	<i>araalam</i>	<i>shadja</i>	<i>shadjam</i>
<i>ardha chandra</i>	<i>ardha chandram</i>	<i>sikhara</i>	<i>sikharam</i>
		<i>suchi mukha</i>	<i>soochee mukham</i>
<i>bhramara</i>	<i>bhramaram</i>	<i>sukatund</i>	<i>sukatundam</i>
		<i>swaraprastara</i>	<i>swara-prastaaram</i>
<i>gamaka</i>	<i>gamakam</i>	<i>tayampaka</i>	<i>taayampaka</i>
<i>gandhara</i>	<i>gaandhaaram</i>	<i>tripataka</i>	<i>tripataakam</i>
<i>hamsapaksha</i>	<i>hamsapaksham</i>	<i>udana</i>	<i>udaanan</i>
<i>hamsasyam</i>	<i>hamsaasyam</i>	<i>urna nabha</i>	<i>oorna naabham</i>
<i>kanakurinji</i>	<i>kaanakurinji</i>	<i>vaka</i>	<i>vaaka</i>
<i>kapitbaka</i>	<i>kapitbakam</i>	<i>vardhamanaka</i>	<i>vardha-maanakam</i>
<i>kartari mukha</i>	<i>kartaree mukham</i>	<i>varikka plavu</i>	<i>varikka plaavu</i>
<i>kataka</i>	<i>katakam</i>	<i>vivartana</i>	<i>vivarttanam</i>
<i>kataka mukha</i>	<i>kataka mukham</i>	<i>vyana</i>	<i>vyaanam</i>
<i>kurma</i>	<i>koorman</i>		
<i>mahuri</i>	<i>maahuri</i>		
<i>mrgasirsha</i>	<i>mrga seersbam</i>		
<i>mudrakhya</i>	<i>mudraakhyam</i>		
<i>mukhya prana</i>	<i>mukhya praanan</i>		
<i>mukula</i>	<i>mukulam</i>		
<i>mukura</i>	<i>mukuram</i>		

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- Magazines
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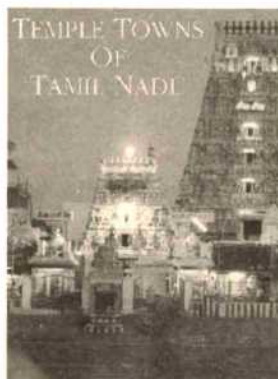
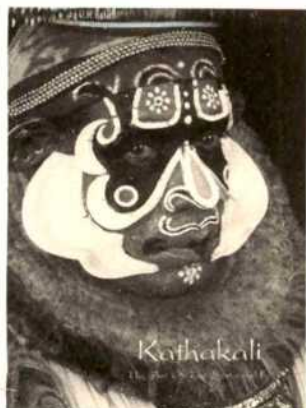
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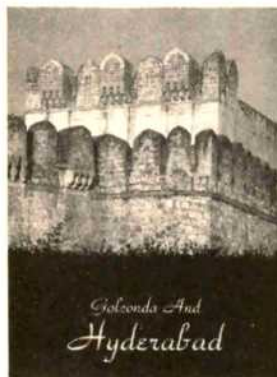
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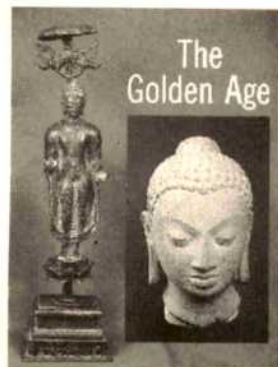
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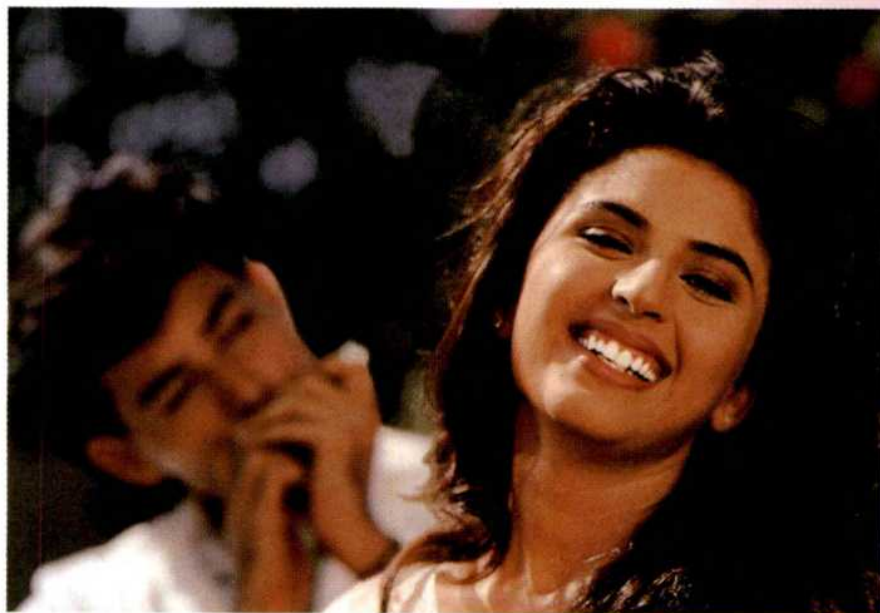
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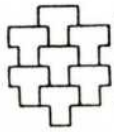
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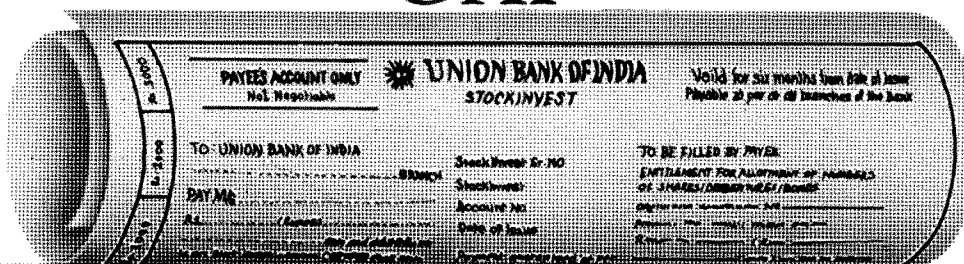
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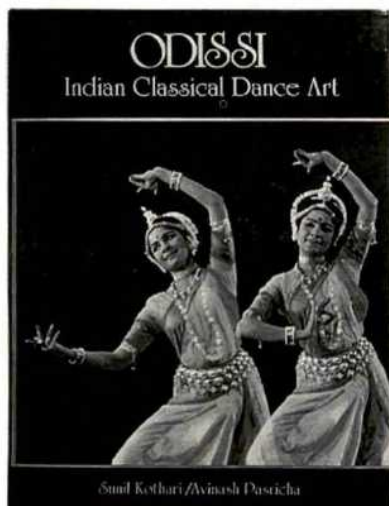
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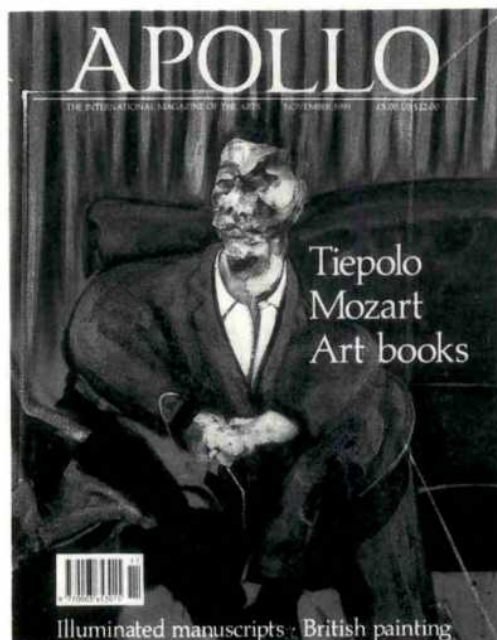
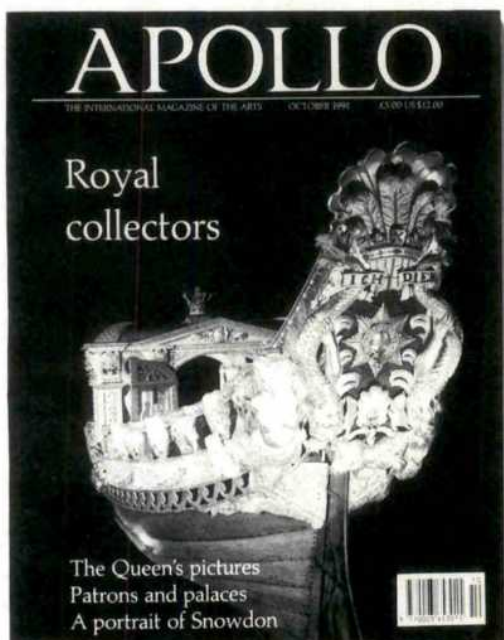
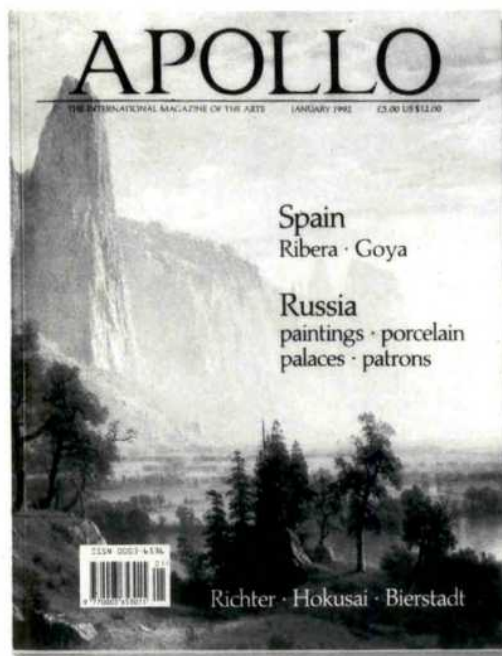
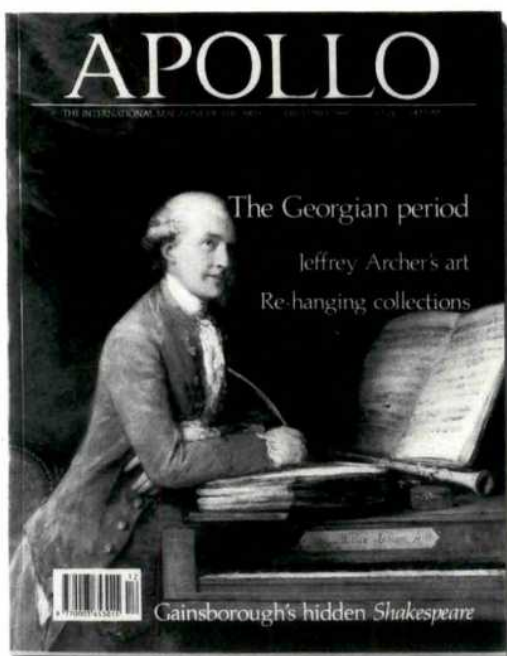


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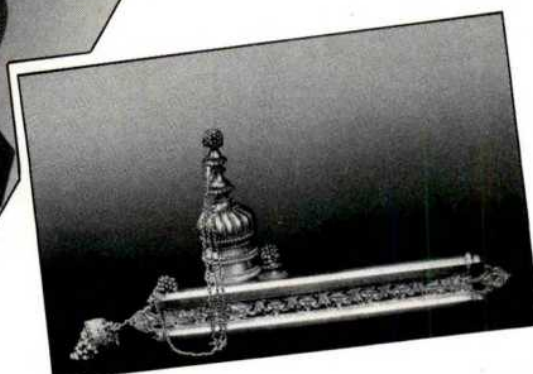
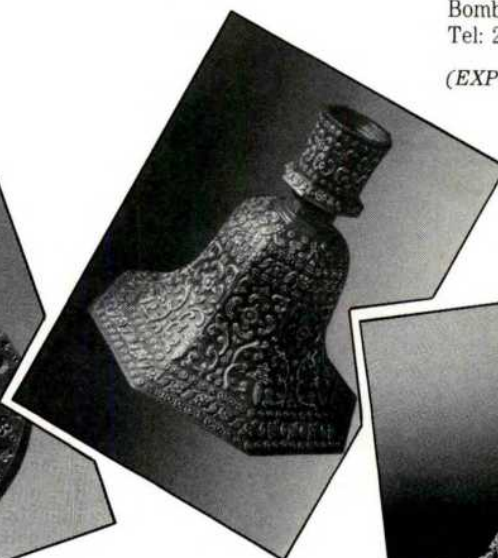
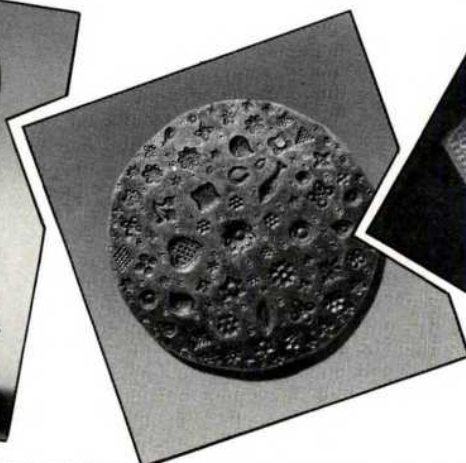
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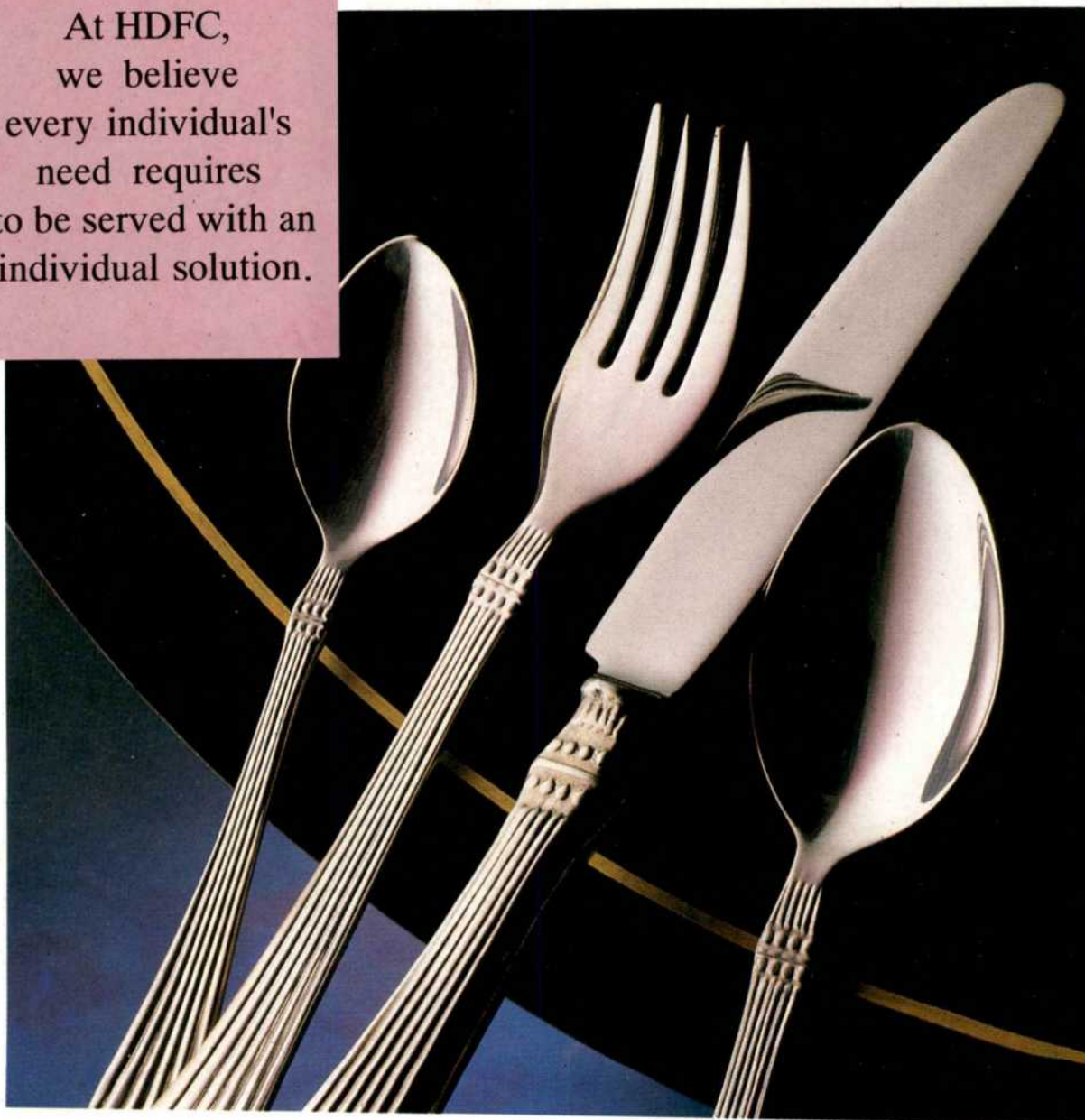


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